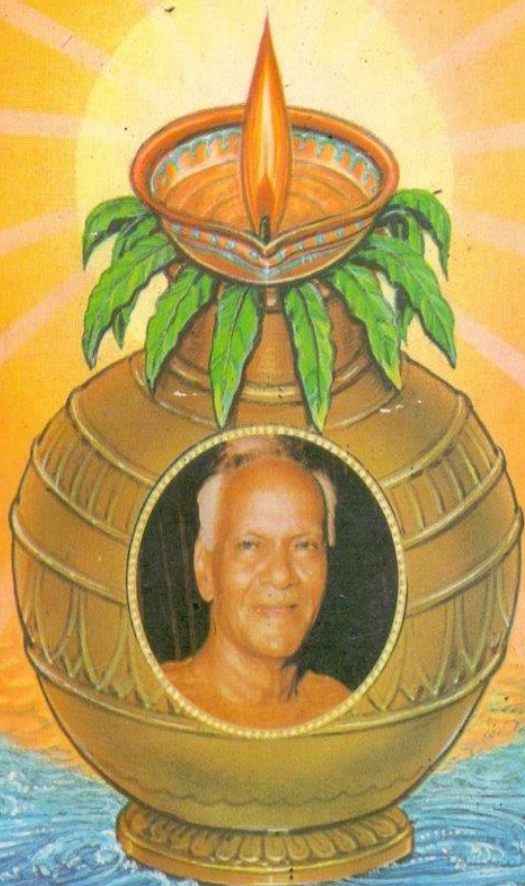


A MANUAL OF HINDU MARRIAGE



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OM BHUR BHUWAHA SWAHA

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PREFACE

Marriage is an important institution of human society. In the remote past of human history man was living and behaving like an animal. Then he was hardly ever aware of his relationships to his parents, brothers and sisters. In the biological kingdom, this primitive man was even subordinate in status to the animals. Neither did he have the strength of an elephant nor the sharp teeth and claws of the carnivora. He did not even have the hard protective hide of the rhinoceros and could not save his life by any other extraordinary physical capability. Nevertheless, he did possess the unique human instinct of cooperation and organisation, with the help of which, he could dominate over the animals besides protecting and proliferating his own species. But in spite of this natural trait, in absence of permanent arrangements for housing, food and clothes, the primitive man was living in small groups, in large caves and on trees. Since in those days the institution of family had not come into existence, the relation between man and woman was different from what it is today, in modern times. Then, all women members of the community were being treated

as common sexual partners and their progenies regarded as children of the community. According to a reference in *Mahabharat*, analysing the problems of this system, a social reformer named *Shwet Ketu* proposed and established the institution of marriage from which evolved the present set of family.

There is little doubt that tradition of marriage has made a significant contribution in organisation and development of human society and with the help of this institution man has been able to make significant achievements by joining much larger families and thereby enlarging the scope of cooperation to cover larger and larger fields of activities. Giving due importance to this human necessity, the Indian philosophers declared the ceremony of marriage as a sacrosanct religious rite, decreeing that the bond between husband and wife be considered everlasting, pious and in all activities of life, the couple were to participate with absolute cooperation of body and soul, so that their resultant contribution became many times than even their combined individual input.

This institution of family further enlarged to constitute ethnic groups, which later became the foundation stones for the various nations of the world. The tradition of marriage was adopted by people allover the world with ceremonial modifications according to local requirements and social milieu of the region. Nevertheless, the basic framework of the process continued to be the same-in that the suitability of the would be husband for a maiden was first ascertained by the father of the girl and on his

approval, the couple was declared as man and wife after participating in some religious ceremony. While handing over the responsibilities for looking after the bride (*Kanya Dan*), the groom was also gifted with articles of domestic requirements like eatables, clothes and kitchenware, to enable the newly-weds establish their home conveniently.

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Nowhere in the scriptures (*Smritis and Puranas*) there is a reference to the so called tradition of pre-fixing a dowry prior to matrimony, entertaining large number of guests from the groom's party or celebrating the event with pompous dance, music and feasts for days together. Though in religious books, procedures for performance of *Hawan (Yagya)* are given in great detail, wherein the couple is asked to enter into an agreement and takes oath with the divine powers as witness, none of the sacred books mention about the multifarious practices and rituals in vogue today; presentations of cash, ornaments and articles during the rituals (*Neg-Jog*) or expensive exhibitionism. The elaborate descriptions of marriages given in some poetries and epics are in fact gross poetic exaggerations of events described by earlier poets, which the later writers had penned down to suit the then prevailing environment. The temporal contemporaneity of most of the local matrimonial customs is also proved by their variety from region to region. For instance,

whereas in some areas, the bride's guardians are required to pay a substantial dowry to the groom, in others, it is the groom who pays the bride-money. While in some castes special care is taken to avoid matrimonial alliance between families having even remote ancestral affinity (*Gotra*), in others, some small ethnic groups amongst *Brahmins*, who consider themselves to be blue-blooded, prefer marrying their sons and daughters to the children of first cousins. Amongst the *Brahmins* of Malabar region, the maternal uncle of the groom takes part in those rituals, in which elsewhere the groom participates. Members of many castes initially dress the bride as a widow and have a formal period of profound mourning before the matrimony takes place. Amongst some castes, the bride is carried in lap by her father-in-law. Thus in the Hindu community there are many such queer practices, customs and traditions of matrimony, which though local and considered strictly according to prescribed religious procedures, are often contradictory to each other. It is thus quite apparent that any assertion about a particular custom being a divine decree or a scriptural proclamation (*Ved Vakya*) would only indicate the ignorance of the person.

CEREMONIAL EXPENDITURE

The event of marriage is undoubtedly an occasion for celebration, since it marks the intimate union of two souls of personnel belonging to two different families, through which open many avenues of progress and

prosperity. With the help of institution of marriage man gets an opportunity to choose and live with a partner for life—a close confederate with whom he (or she) is fully assured of intimate interaction and dependence in moments of pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Hence there is a justification in celebrating the moment with close friends and relatives. For the same reason, it is also not unfair for the parents of the bride and the groom to give some gifts and presentations to the newly-weds. Besides, if a marriage ceremony according to some specified religious procedure is also made into a programme of entertainment, it becomes a special event for commemoration of pleasant memories later. However, when the desire for entertainment and exhibitionism crosses boundaries of decency and pragmatism and becomes an obsession, it creates a dangerous situation for the family economy. This is one reason, because of which for most of the persons marriage ceremonies have become a liability and people are particularly worried about the marriage of their daughters.

Now-a-days, some well-to-do factions of society are indulging in various types of unnecessary exhibitionist expenditure during marriages. In the vain attempt to emulate the former, even to a limited extent, an average family becomes bankrupt and has to face the consequences for years.

Extravagance in matrimonial rites is the most damaging aberration of this glorious tradition. In a large number of cases, the guardians of the groom expect the

bride's parents to give the maximum dowry in cash and kind which is often beyond the means of the donor, who somehow managing to meet the demand even by disposing of personal assets, plunges deep into indebtedness. The bride's people too do not lag behind in this unhealthy practice and expect the groom's parents—who have already incurred huge expenditure in making the boy educated and self-earning, to give expensive ornaments and clothes to the bride, and in the process both reach the brink of economic disaster.

In this way, the members of the groom's and bride's family enter into an unhealthy competition of taking the maximum advantage from the other party—the former looking for a donor of maximum dowry and the later for one who can gift most expensive ornaments and clothes. In the process, both are subjugated to back-breaking economic burdens and after a couple of marriages in the family become bankrupt.

The expenditure on arrangements for marriage too are no less expensive. Unbearable financial stress is to be borne by the groom's party in decorations and conveyance of the marriage-procession and in reception thereof by the bride's people. Those intending to join the groom's procession abstain from their jobs for long durations, and incur heavy expenditure exclusively for preparing new clothes, besides making the groom and his family feel greatly obliged for their company. The latter too, expressing gratitude for gracing the procession make elaborate arrangements for conveyance and other

facilities. Nevertheless, in spite of best efforts, the bride's people are unable to satisfy the large number of persons accompanying the groom's party and as a consequence remain under constant stress. Only the one who has gone through this experience of making arrangements for boarding, lodging and entertaining a marriage party can appreciate the stress and problems involved in the activity.

PURPOSE BEHIND SACRED RITES

Marriage is a sacred union of two souls. In course of the ceremony, sacrificing their individual identity, two human beings pledge to constitute a set of complementary units of personalities. Each man and woman in this world is born with certain specific characteristics—some talents and some shortcomings. In the union by marriage, either of the couple pledges to make up for the deficiencies of the other partner by supplementing from one's own efficacy. In this way the totality of near perfect personalities is evolved. For this very reason, marriage has been considered a necessity for leading a natural human life. The purpose of matrimony is to make two persons coordinate their movement onto the path of progress like two wheels of a carriage by supplementing each other's requirements with one's own energy, qualifications and motivations. Carnality has a very insignificant and subordinate role in married life. The principal objective of matrimony is to produce that strong force by union of two souls, which

is capable of helping either of the partners in promoting allround material, secular as well as spiritual progress in life..

AN IDEAL MARRIAGE

Now a days matrimonial alliances are principally influenced by carnality. In selection of a spouse greater importance is being attached to visual appeal, complexion, physical features, make-up and other external aspects of personalities. If such a tendency is allowed to persist, the institution of marriage will be reduced merely to a social sanction for cohabitation, which would tantamount to nothing but legalised prostitution, In such a state of affairs, this country (India) would also face conjugal problems like the west. Attraction or disillusionment arising out of physical qualifications or otherwise would result in frequent divorces and remarriages. The present trend encouraging selection of a bride on the basis of her physical qualifications is bound to have a reaction in future and would boomrang with the girls accepting only physically appealing men as their life partners. In such a situation either of the partners would be deprived of the real advantages of a happy family life. Hence, before it is too late, this worsening trend should be arrested and as was the practice earlier, ignoring physical appearance, preference should be given to virtues and emotional compatibility in selection of a life partner. Let the person to be married peep deeper into the beauty of the soul of the partner and make

maximum possible effort to supplement the deficiencies in an environment of love, tolerance, spiritual affinity, faith and understanding. Even if some reformation does not become possible, the shortcomings should be ignored without any discontentment. This is the basic principle for achieving a life-long happy conjugal relationship. Instead of looking forward to physical advantages from the life partner, the husband and wife should think of surrendering personal interests and creating possibilities of progress in life with joint endeavour.

One does not have full freedom to choose a life partner after searching, scrutinizing and verifying whatever attributes one considers necessary. However, this process should end before the marriage. After matrimony there remains no scope for ignoring the spouse under the excuse of a false judgement of one's own self. Whatever be the virtues or shortcomings of the spouse, after the marriage one becomes ethically bound with the responsibility of sustaining the relationship. In fact the sacred rites during the ceremony are performed to achieve this very objective.

The presence of respectable persons of the society, *Gurus*, family members, relatives and invocation of divine powers on the occasion of this ceremony is necessary, so that either of the defaulters ignoring the sacred agreements of joint responsibility is desisted from going so and punished for dereliction of duty in married life. In presence of respectable persons of the society, the bride and groom announce their decision to remain united through a number of pledges. The convention of taking

the pledge itself is the sacred ceremony of marriage.

On this occasion, both bride and the groom are asked to fix this concept firmly and indelibly in mind, that erasing their erstwhile individual personalities, they are evolving into a unified entity of mind and soul. That from now onwards, they would neither dictate terms to each other nor dominate over the other spouse for taking personal advantage or for expressing one's superiority. On the contrary, each spouse would act for convenience of the other. Considering personal desires and necessities subordinate to those of the other partner, both would maintain a spirit of benevolence and be liberal and tolerant to enable the vehicle of married life move smoothly. Let either spouse understand these aspects thoroughly and take a pledge to follow the codes of conduct throughout life. This is the objective of this auspicious ceremony. Only after thoroughly appreciating these aspects and unconditionally and truthfully accepting the conditions, should the couple unite in matrimony. Let the bride and the groom be apprised of these facts well before participation in sacred rites or else they may be informed when seated for the ceremony and their acceptance sought. Only after ascertaining about their concurrence and hearty acceptance should the process of ceremony be carried forward.

A CHECKLIST OF ARRANGEMENTS

It is necessary to know the requirements and make prior arrangements for welcoming the bridegroom,

invoking the invisible divine powers (*Dev Poojan*) and performance of *Yagya* (oblations in consecrated fire) and other rites. For a programme of mass-marriage, there should be adequate arrangements for a couple on each seat. For effective management, on each seat, an experienced person (well-versed in rites) may be appointed. If the ceremony is to be performed for one couple only, the priest (*Acharya*) himself can take charge. Apart from general arrangements, the priest should also confirm the adequacy of essential items required for the rites.

A Checklist of items against the main rites is given hereunder:-

*** RECEPTION OF BRIDEGROOM.**

A *Thal* (metal plate) for washing the hands and feet of the bridegroom to prevent spilling of water. To be removed after hands and feet are washed (after *Madhu Perk Pan*)

* **YAGYOPVEET-** (Wearing the consecrated thread). A pair of yellow-coloured *Dhoti* and *Kurta* is to be worn by the bridegroom.

*** ANNOUNCEMENT OF CEREMONY-**

Full family details of the bride and the groom to be recorded beforehand. Garments and garlands to be gifted are to be readily available.

* **KANYADAAN** (Handing over charge of bride to her

new guardian). Paste of ground turmeric for colouring the palms of bride. About 250 gm. of *Aata* for the sacred gift (*Gupta Daan*)

* **GRANTHI BANDHAN** (Tying nuptial knot).

Turmeric, flowers, rice, fresh grass-blades (*Doorva*), coins-five auspicious items.

* **HALDI CHADHANA** (Turmeric treatment)

To be performed after *Dev Poojan* (optional). See the *mantra* at the appropriate place in the text.

* **SHILA AROHAN**

A flat piece of rock or stone will be required.

* **OBLATIONS**

Besides the herbal mixture for *Yagya*, roasted unthreshed rice-corns will be required for *Laja Home*.

* **PAD PRAKCHAALAN** (Washing the feet)

For washing the feet of the couple a large metal plate (*Parat* or *Thal*) will be required.

* **BLESSINGS BY RELATIVES AND GUESTS**

Keep flowers and rice in sufficient quantity for each guest to be sprinkled at appropriate time.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

From the very beginning an environment may be

created to generate general interest in the proceedings so that the close relatives and friends of the couple become emotionally involved in the rituals and are not merely indifferent spectators. This emotional involvement practically helps in achieving the objective of the sacred rituals. For this purpose an appeal may be made individually to each person or to the group as a whole.

YAGYOPAVEET

The bachelors present on the occasion are made to wear a new *yagyopaveet* whereas others don a new pair of yellow-cloured clothes.

If the man to be married has earlier gone through the *yagyopaveet* ceremony, the one he is wearing is ceremoniously replaced with a new one and a new pair of clothes is also worn. It is advisable to perform this ritual early in the morning, on the day of marriage. It appears odd to make the well-dressed bridegroom undress during the ceremony for wearing or changing the *yagyopaveet*. If convenient, after the reception, the groom may be made to wear the *yagyopaveet* over the clothes, which may be put underneath afterwards.

DWAARCHAAR (Reception of bridegroom)

The bridegroom is offered a special seat and formally honoured. Thereafter, the bride is invited and the couple is asked to exchange garlands and gifts of clothes. The traditional letters/cards prepared for the occasion may also be exchanged.

In course of private household marriages, at times the members of bride's and bridegroom's family insist on some local customs and rituals. Such requests may be carefully noted before the ceremony and skilfully incorporated in the mainstream of the ceremony.

THE PRELIMINARY RITUALS

Invite the bride and the groom to the matrimonial altar. Welcome them on their entry with the mantra "Bhadram karnebhihi....", showering with grains of rice. Let the bride be seated on the right of the groom. The father, brother and other relatives of bride, who will be taking part in *Kanyadaan* later, are also seated besides the bride. The articles for the rite are kept before each individual. All persons present are made to perform the six consecrating rites namely *pavitrikaran*, *achman*, *shikhaa bandhan*, *praanaayaam*, *nyaas*, *prithivipoojan* etc.

MANGALAAACHARNAM

(Welfare Mantra)

**OM! BHADRAM KARNEBHIHI SHRINUYAAMA
DEVAA, BHADRAM PASHYEMAAKSHABHIRYA-
JATRAHAA. STHIRAIRANGAISTUSTUVAA, GWAM,
SASTANOOBHIHI, VYASHEMAHI DEVHITAM
YADAAYUHU.**

PAVITRIKARANAM

(Cleansing of mind, and soul)

Take a little water in the palm of the left hand and

cover it with the right hand. After the enunciation of *mantra* sprinkle the water backward over the head and body.

**OM! APAVITRAH PAVITRO-VAA,
SARVAVASTHAAM GATOPI VAA. YAH
SMARETPUNDAREEKAASHAM, SA
BAAHYAABHYANTARAH SHUCHIHI. OM
PUNAATU PUNDARI KAAKSHAH, PUNAATU
PUNDARIKAAKSHAH, PUNAATU.**

AACHAMANAM

(Cleansing of faculties controlling thoughts, speech and deeds.)

Take a little water in the palm of right hand and sip it three times successively with pronouncement of each *mantra*.

- 1) **OM! AMRITOPASTARANAMASI SWAAHAA**
- 2) **OM! AMRITAAPIDHAANAMASI SWAAHAA**
- 3) **OM! SATYAM YASHAH SHREERMAYI
SHREEHI SHRAYATAAM SWAAHAA.**

SHIKHAAVANDANAM

(Invocation for receiving constructive inspirations)

Take a little water in the palm of the left hand. Dip fingers of right hand in it and then place the tips of fingers held together on the occiput. (Persons maintaining *Shikha* to tie it in a half knot.

**OM ! CHIDROOPINI MAHAAMAAYE, DIVYA
TEJAH SAMANVITE. TISTHA DEVI SHIKHAA
MADHYE TEJO VRIDDHIM KURUSHWA ME.**

PRAANAAYAAMAH

(Absorption of bio-energy from cosmos and expulsion of undesirable effluents of mind after reaction of this energy within self)

The middle fingers, ring finger and the thumb of the right hand are used in the breathing exercise for drawing in bio-energy from cosmos.

(1) Close the right nostril by pressing at the side by thumb and inhale slowly through the left one.

Conceptualize that you are drawing in the cosmic energy of rising sun as a bright golden mist.

(2) Close the left nostril as well by pressing on side with the middle and ring finger. Hold the breath.

Conceptualize that the energy drawn in is activating a small bright spot at your naval and burning the blemishes covering it removing the effluent as a dark smoke.

(3) Release the pressure on the right nostril and exhale slowly through the nostril. Conceptualize that the mental effluents are escaping through the exhalation.

(4) Close the right nostril and hold the breath.

(5) Now inhale through the right nostril and closing it after inhalation again by the thumb retain breath.

(6) Exhale through the left nostril while keeping the right one closed with the thumb. Close the left nostril

and hold the breath.

Serial numbers 1 to 6 make one cycle of the *Pranayam*. At least one cycle is to be completed.

Points to remember:

- (1) Inhalations and exhalations are carried out slowly with maximum retention and expulsion of air.
- (2) Inhalation is carried out through the same nostril through which exhalation is done.
- (3) Breath is retained for a while both after inhalation and exhalation.

**OM ! BHOOH OM ! BHUVAH OM ! SWAH OM !
MAHAH, OM ! JANAHA OM ! TAPAH OM ! SATYAM.
OM ! TATSAVITURVARENYAM, BHARGO DEVASYA
DHIMAHI DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAAT.**

**OM ! AAOJYOTEE RASOMRITAM, I RAHMA
BHOORBHUVAH SWAH O-O-M.**

NYAASAH

(Cleansing of nerve centres controlling sense organs and locomotion).

Take a little water in the palm of LEFT hand . Wet the fingers of the right hand in it. Touch the directed sense organs (lips, both nostrils, both eyes, both ears, both arms, both thighs respectively-first the left one and then the right) and sprinkle on the body backwards with the respective *mantras*.

OM ! VAANGME AASYESTU. (Lips)

OM ! NASORME PRAANOSTU. (Both nostrils)

OM ! AKSHNORME CHAKSHURASTU.

(Both eyes)

OM ! KARNAYORME SHROTRAMASTU.

(Both ears)

OM ! BAHVORME BALAMASTU. (Both arms)

OM ! OORVORME OJOSTU. (Both thighs)

OM ! ARISHTAANIME- ANGAANI, TANOOSTANVAA ME SAHSANTU-U-U.

(Sprinkle on the body backwards with both hands)

PRITHIVEE POOJANAM

(Invocation of tolerance from motherly qualities naturally inherent in earth)

Sprinkle a few drops of water on earth with the *mantra*.

**OM ! PRITHVI TVAYAA DHIRTAA LOKAA,
DEVI TWAM VISHNUNAA DHRITAA. TWAM CHA
DHARAI MAAM DEVI, PAVITRAM KURU
CHAASANAM.**

VAR SATKAAR (Honouring the bridegroom)

Being the most honourable guest, the bridegroom is respectfully received with chanting of *mantras*.

Direction and Motivation

The bridegroom is honourably received as an

important guest. In family life, the lady in charge of the house holds the supreme status. With all humility, the groom and his well wishers come to bride's house to ask for her hand. It, therefore, becomes the prime responsibility of bride's people to give due respect to the groom's party and reciprocate the goodwill expressed by latter in connection with the noble cause of marriage.

Points to remember

For the bride's people - *Var* literally means the one worthy of acceptance. Therefore, agree for the matrimonial alliance only after thoroughly evaluating the bridegroom as an appropriate life-partner for the girl. Thereafter, the groom is honoured with this point of view and the grace of Almighty sought for maintenance of this goodwill.

For the bridegroom's people- On being honoured, do not feel unnecessarily egoistic. Remember that our sages had made the system of honouring the bridegroom for his gentlemanly qualities like modesty, humility, duty consciousness and spirit of cooperation. Hence in order to be instinctively appreciated by the bride's family, it is imperative to make these attributes manifest. Such a behaviour is bound to evoke a favourable response and an extremely cordial relationship between the two families.

For both parties- The factor most detrimental for establishing congenial relationship between the two families is the narrow selfish outlook instigating

insistence on desired transaction in cash or kind. On the pretext of rituals when either parties exert pressure for giving dowry, ornaments, clothes etc. or insist on some sort of exhibitionism, the goodwill dissipates and undercurrents of antipathy and reaction develop. Keeping in view the necessity of longterm goodwill between the families, keep discussions and action on such destructive issues at arms length.

Let it be remembered that in course of reception, heartfelt cordiality is considered more important than physical treatments. It is, therefore, necessary to be emotionally involved in each ritual with a sense of goodwill.

ACTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION-

Holding a few grains of rice in hand, let the receptionist conceptualize that the most virtuous attributes of the bridegroom are being honoured. Invoke divine powers for augmentation of these attributes with the following mantra:

**OM! SAADHUBHAVAAN AASTAM
ARCHYSHYAAMO BHAVANTAM.**

Taking the rice offered by the receptionist in his right hand, the groom conceptualizes that he is conceding to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining a high character worthy of being appreciated by the bride's people of whom the receptionist is a representative.

Let the bridegroom respond by saying:
OM ! ARCHAL

AASAN (Seating)

Let the receiving personnel touch the seat (or a symbolical article like seat cover) and pronounce the *mantra*. Pray that the groom finds a suitable environment for development of virtues of a high order and thus becomes worthy of our (of the bride's family) affection.

**OM ! VISHTARO, VISHTARO, VISHTARAH,
 PRATIGRIHYATAAM.**

Receiving the *Vistar* from the father in law (receptionist) the groom says:

OM ! PRATIGRIHNAAML

Now respectfully offer him the seat with the following *mantra*:

**OM! VARSHMOSMI SAMAANAANAAM
 UDYATAAMIVA SOORYAH. IMANTAMABHI-
 TISHTHAAML, YO MA KASHCHAA- BHIDAASATL**

PAADYA (Feet washing)

From a small pot let the receptionist pour water on the feet of the groom (held in a large plate to avoid spilling). Conceptualize that the feet being washed are worthy of reverence since these are going to advance in a

direction to make the person (groom) an ideal householder as envisaged by the *rishis* (sages).

Say:

**OM ! PAADYAM, PAADYAM, PAADYAM,
PRATIGRIHYA- TAAM.**

The groom responds by saying

OM ! PRATIGRIHNAAMI.

While washing the feet, the receptionist invokes the *Ishtdeo* (the family deity chosen for some specific attributes of God), to keep the zest of the groom for advancing towards ideals.

**OM! VIRAAJO DOHOSI VIRAAJO
DOHAMASHIYA MAYI PAADYAAYAI VIRAAJO
DOHAH.**

ARGHYA (Washing hands with consecrated water)

Let the receptionist hold the pot of scented consecrating water in hand and conceptualize that by touching it the hands of the receiver (groom) will be spiritually motivated for performance of righteous activities.

Say:

**OM! ARGHO, ARGHO, ARGHAH,
PRATIGRIHYATAAM.**

Receiving the pot the groom says:

OM ! PRATIGRIHNAAMI

While washing hands with this consecrated water, the groom conceptualizes that the spiritual powers are motivating his hands to perform righteous endeavours. In the process the following *mantra* is pronounced:

**OM ! APAHSTHAYUSHMAABHIHI, SARV-
AANKAA MAANA VAAPNAVAANL OM!SAMUDRAM
VAH PRAHINOMI, SWAAM YONIMABHI-
GACHCHATA. ARISHTAASMAAKAM VEERAA,
MAAPARAASECHI MATPAYAE.**

AACHAMAN (Partaking of consecrated water)

Let the receptionist present the pot containing consecrated water and conceptualize that the water is going to bestow divine powers for making the speech and personality of the groom implemental in development of an upright character.

**OM! AACHAMANEYAM, AACHAMANEYAM,
AACHAMANIYAM PRATIGRIHYATAAM.**

Taking the pot in hand the groom says:

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI

While sipping the water three times, the groom concentrates on deeply imbibing the above concept in his mind, intellect and inner-self. During the process he chants the following mantra:

**OM! AAMAAGAN YASHASAA SAGWAM SRU
VARCHASAA. TAM MAA KURU PRIYAM
PRAJAANAAMADHIPATI, PASHOO-
NAAMARISHTIM TANOONAAM.**

NAIVEDYA-MADHUPARKA
(Partaking consecrated food)

Prepare a sample mixture of pure, wholesome, energizing natural food by mixing milk, curd, honey, sugar and leaves of *Tulsee*. Let the receptionist hold the pot containing a little of this mixture (about 25 ml.) in hand and invoke divinity to always provide the groom such food i.e. food material which is pure, honestly and affectionately produced, procured and prepared, is health-promoting to enable him retain his virtuous attributes throughout life. Let it be handed over to the groom with the following *mantra*.

**OM! MADHUPARKO, MADHUPARKO,
MADHUPARKAH, PRATIGRIHYATAAM.**

Receiving the pot of consecrated food in hand the groom says.

OM! PRATIGRIHNAAMI.

Partaking the consecrated food the groom conceptualizes that he is pledging himself to consume only honestly produced, procured and lovingly prepared and served health-promoting food for imbibition of virtues in thoughts, speech and deeds. While taking this food let him pronounce the *mantra*;

**OM! YANMADHUNO MADHAVYAM PARAMA-
GWAM ROOPAMANNAADYAM. TENAAHAM
MADHUNO-MADHAVYEN PARAMEN, ROOPENA-
ANNAADYEN PARAMO, MADHA VYONNAADOSANI**

Thereafter, let the groom wash hands and rinse mouth with water.

VARAN SOOTRA DHAARANAM (Designating the couple as groom and bride to be wedded)

With the foregoing rituals, the bridegroom stands spiritually committed to high ideals of a responsible householder and citizen. He has now become eligible for the matrimonial ceremony.

Let the priest formally designate the couple as bride and the groom by tying the consecrated thread (*Kalava*-red-yellow coloured strands of thread) on their wrists (Right wrist of the groom and left one of bride). While tying the thread the following *mantra* is pronounced;

**OM! YADAABADHNANDAANKSHAAYANAA,
HIRANYA GWAM SHATAANEKAI, SUMANASYA-
MAANAAHAA. TANMA AABADHNAAMI SHATA-
SHAARADAAI AAUSHMAANJARADASHTIRYATHAA
SAMMA.**

CHANDAN DHAARNAM (Application of vermilion on forehead-an expression of goodwill of the priest wishing the person to achieve an elevated status.)

Let the priest put the vermilion mark (a mixture of water, lime and turmeric powder) on the foreheads of the couple wishing them progress in all walks of life with the following mantra.

**OM! GANDHADWAARAAM DURAADHAR-
SHAAM NITYAPUSHTAAM KAREESHINEEM.
EESHWAREEM SARVA BHOOTAANAAM
TAAMIHOPAHVAYE SHRIYAM.**

YAGYOPAWEET DHAARANAM (Wearing consecrated thread across left shoulder-a constant reminder of pledge to follow *Gayatri*-disciplines).

In many castes amongst *Hindus*, the *Yagyopaweeet* ceremony is performed at an earlier age. If the groom has not worn *Yagyopaweeet* earlier he is made to wear it ceremoniously according to prescribed procedure. According to custom a bachelor wears a *Yagyopaweeet* consisting of a single strand of threads, whereas during the matrimonial ceremony he is made to wear a pair of

Yagyopaweets. This is to signify the twofold responsibility as now he is required to take his wife alongwith himself in endeavours to follow a life-style conforming to disciplines of *Gayatri* and *Yagya* i.e. commitment to social welfare at the expense of personal interests. The consecrated thread serves as a constant reminder to this commitment.

Perform the ceremony with the following *mantra*:

**OM! YAGYOPAVEETAM PARAMAM PAVITRAM
PRAJAAPATERYATSAHAJAMPURASTAAT.
AYUSHYAMAGRYAM PRATIMUNCH SHUBHRAM,
YAGYOPAVEETAM BALAMASTU TEJAH**

KALASHPOOJANAM (Symbolic invocation of cosmic powers in a spherical vessel)

The *Kalash* (A miniature pitcher containing water) symbolizes cosmos with all its powers of divinity, whereas water contained in it designates the faith of the devotee. (Water is the most effective solvent in nature, so is faith for divine attributes). The ritual indicates that with profound faith one is capable of absorbing all powers of God present in the cosmos.

Invoke these powers by offering oblations to the *Kalash* with the following *mantras*:

**OM! TATWAAYAAMI BRAHMANAA
VANDAMAANAH, TADAA-SHAASTE YAJAMAANO
HAVIRBHIHI. AHEDAMAANO VARUNEH**

**BODDHURUSHA GWAM, SA-MAANA AAYUHU
PRAMOSHEEHEE.**

(In the process of invocation, rice, grains, flowers and water are oblated)

Now the priest prays with the following mantras while other persons bow with folded hands ;

**OM! MANOJOOTIRJUSHATAAMAAJYASYA,
BRIHASPATIRYAGYAMIMAM TANOTWARISHTAM,
YAGYA GWAM SAMIMAM DADHAATU. VISWE
DEVAASA-IH MAADAYANTAAM-O-OM PRATISHTHA.**

**OM! VARUNAAI NAMAHL AAVAAHAYAAMI,
STHAAPAYAAMI, POOJAYAAMI, DHYAAYAAML
GANDHAAKSHATAMPUSHPAANI DHOOPAM DEEPAM
NAIVEDYAM SAMARPAYAAML TATO
NAMASKAARAM KAROML**

Pray with folded hands:

**OM! KALASHASYA MUKHE VISHNUHU,
KANTHE RUDRAH SAMAASHRITAH.
MOOLE TASYA STHITO BRAHMAA,
MADDHYE MATRIGANAHAH SMRITAAH,
KUKSHAU TU SAGARAAH SARVE,
SAPTADWEEPAA VASUNDHARAA.
RIGVEDOTH YAJURVEDAH,
SAAMAVEDO HYATHARVANAH.
ANGAISHCHA SAHITAAH SARVE,
KALASHANTU SAMAASHRITAAH.
ATRA GAAYATRI SAAVITRI,
SHAANTI PUSHTIKAREE SADAA.**

TWAYI TISHHANTI BHOOTAANI,
 TWAYI PRAANAHAH PRATISHHITAHAH.
 SHIVAH SWAYAM TWAMEVAASI,
 VISHNUSTWAM CHA PRAJAAPATIHA.
 AADITYAA VASAVO RUDRAA,
 VISHWEDEVAHAH SAPATRIKAA.
 TWAI TISHHANTI SARVEPI,
 YATAH KAAMAFALAPRADAHAH.
 TWAT PRASAADAADIMAM YAGYAM,
 KARTUMEEHE JALODBHAVA.
 SAANNIDHYAM KURU ME DEVA,
 PRASNNO BHAV SARVADAA.

DEEP POOJANAM (Invocation of cosmic energy of sun represented in the flame and brilliance of the consecrated wick lamp).

Pray with the following *mantra*:

OM! AGNIRJYOTIRJOTIRAGNIHI SWAAHAA.
 SOORYO JYOTIRJYOTIHI SURYAH SWAAHAA.
 AGNIRVARCHO JYOTIR-VARCHAHA- SWAAHAA.
 SOORYO VARCHO JYOTIRVARCHAHA SWAAHAA.
 JYOTIHI SOORYAH SOORYO JYOTIHI SWAAHAA.

GURU POOJANAM

(Communion with the powers of *Guru*)

Guru is manifestation of celestial powers of God in superman who helps the devotee to commune with the

Almighty. It is therefore absolutely necessary for a seeker to seek patronage of a credible *human-Guru*, who would provide spiritual energy to the devotee and in future regulate it according to latter's requirement. The credibility of *Guru* lies in these qualifications: (1) He must not only be learned in scriptures but know their subtle secrets and must have realized their true import in his own life (*Shrotriya*), (2) a person with spotless character (*Vrijino*), (3) uninfluenced by any desire, he should have no other motive except that of purely doing good to others (*Akamahata*) and (4) he must have realized God i.e. achieved salvation (*Brahmavittam*).

**OM! GURURBRAHMAA GURURVISHNUHU,
GURUREV MAHESHWARAH. GURUREV PARA-
BRAHMA, TASMAI SHREE GURAVE NAMAH.**

**AKHANDAMANDALAAKAARAM, VYAAPTAM
YENA CHARAACHARAM. TATPADAM DARSHITAM
YENA TASMAI SHREE GURAVE NAMAH. OM
SHREE GURAVE NAMAH, AAVAAHAYAAMI
STHAAPAYAAMI DHYAAYAAMI.**

GAYATREE POOJANAM:

Invocation of *Gayatri*; the source of scriptural wisdom (*Ved Mata*), divine powers (*Dev Mata*), creator, preserver and manager of cosmos (*Vishva Mata*)- establisher of creative knowledge (*Sadgyan*) and goodwill (*Sadbhav*) and the cause and effect of successive cycles of cosmic

phenomena, their creation and projection.

**OM! AAYAATU VARADE DEVI, AKSHARE
BRAHMA VAADINL GAAYATRICHCHHANDASAAM
MAATAH, BRAHMA YONE NAMOSTUTE. OM
SHREE GAAYATRYAI NAMAHL AAVAAHAYAAMI
STHAAPAYAAMI DHYAAYAAMI. TATO
NAMASKAARAM KAROML OM STUTAA
MAYAA VARADAA VEDAMAATAA, PRACHO-
DAYANTAAM PAAVAMAANI DWIJAA-NAAM,
AAYUHU PRAANAM PRAJAAM PASHUM, KEERTIM
DRAVINAM BRAHMA VARCHASAM, MAHYAM
DATTWAA VRAJAT BRAHMA LOKAM-MA.**

GANESH POOJANAM

Invoke *Ganesh*- foremost amongst revered powers of divinity as representative of wisdom and prudence. The invocation is carried out in the beginning of all religious rituals to ward off likely interference, obstacles or disturbance by visible or invisible, known and unknown forces.

**OM! EK DANTAAI VIDMAHE,
VAKRATUNDAAI DHEEMAHL TANNO DANTEE
PRACHODAYAAT.**

**ABHEEPSITAARTH SIDDHYARTHAM,
POOJITO YAH SURASURAIH. SARVA-
VIGHNAHARASTASMAI, GANAADHI-PATAYE
NAMAHL.**

**OM! SHREEMANMAHAA GANAADHIPATAYE
NAMAHL. AAVAAHAYAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI,
DHYAAYAAMI.**

GAURI POOJANAM

Pray to the universal maternal power of God symbolizing faith, purity of thoughts and action.

OM! GIRIJAAYAI VIDMAHE, SHIVA-PRIYAAYAI DHEEMAHI, TANNO GAURI PRACHODAYAAT.

SARVAMANGAL MAANGALYE, SHIVE SARVAARTH SAADHIKE. SHARANYE TRYAMBAKE GAURI, NAARAAYANI NAMOS-TUTE.

OM! SHRI GAURYAI NAMA. AAVAHA-YAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI, DHYAAYAAMI.

SARVADEV NAMASKARH (Invocation of all divine manifestations related to the devotee)

OM! SIDDHIBUDDHISAHITAAI SHREE MANMAHAA GANAADHIPATAYE NAMA.

OM! LAKSHMEENAARAAYANAABH-YAAM NAMA.

OM! UMAA MAHESHWARAABHYAAM NAMA.

OM! VAANEE HIRANYA GARBHAABH-YAAM NAMA.

OM! SHACHEE PURANDARAABHYAAM NAMA.

OM! MAATAA PITRI CHARAN KAMA-LEBHYO NAMA.

OM! KULADEVATAABHYO NAMA.

OM! ISHTA DEVATAABHYO NAMA.

OM! GRAAMA DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.
OM! STHAAN DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.
OM! VAASTU DEVATAABHYO NAMAH.
OM! SARVEBHYO DEVEBHYO NAMAH.
OM! SARVEBHYO BRAAHMANEBHYO
NAMAH.

OM! SARVEBHYASTEERTHEBHYO
NAMAH.

OM! ETATKARMAPRADHAAN SHREE
GAYATREE DEVYAI NAMAH.

OM! PUNYAM PUNYAAHAM DEERGH-
MAAYURASTU.

SHODASHOPACHAAR POOJANAM (Formal reception
of all divine powers-a 16 course treatment)

OM! SARVEBHYO DEVEBHYO NAMAH.

AAVAAHA-YAAMI, STHAAPAYAAMI.

- 1. AASANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 2. PAADYAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 3. ARGHYAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 4. AACHAMANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 5. SNAANAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 6. VASTRAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 7. YAGYOPAVEETAM SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 8. GANDHAM VILEPAYAAMI.**
- 9. AKSHATAAN SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 10. PUSHPAANI SAMARPAYAAMI.**
- 11. DHOOPAM AAGHRAAPAYAAMI.**
- 12. DEEPAM DARSHAYAAMI.**
- 13. NAIVEDYAM NIVEDAYAAMI.**
- 14 TAAMBOOLPUNGIFALAANI**
SAMARPAYAAMI.

15. DAKSHINAAM SAMARPAYAAML

16. SARVAABHAAVE AKSHATAAN

**SAMARPAYAAML TATO NAMASKAARAM
KAROML**

**OM! NAMOSTWANANTAAI SAHASRA MOORTAYE,
SAHASRA PAADAAKSHISHIRORUBAAHAVE. SAHASRA
NAAMNE PURUSHAAI SHAASHWATE SAHASRA
KOTEE YUG DHAARINE NAMAH.**

SWASTIWAACHANAM

This *mantra* helps in success of all virtuous ventures, ensures peace and objectivity. It is considered auspicious and welfare-promoting.

**1. OM! GANAANAAM TWAA GANPATI GWAM
HAWAAMAHE, PRIYAANAAM TWAA PRIYAPATI
GWAM HAVAAMAHE, NIDHINAAM TWAA NIDHIPATI
GWAM HAWAAMAHE, VASOMAM. AAHAMAJAANI
GARBHADHA MAATWAMA JAASI GARBHADHAM-
MA.**

**2. OM! SWASTI NA INDROVRIDDHA
SHRAVAHAHA, SWASTINAH POOSHAA VISHWA-
VEDAAHAA. SWASTINASTAARKSHYOARISHTA-
NEMIH, SWASTI NO BRIHASPATIRDADHAATU.**

**3. OM! PAYAH PRITHIVYAAM PAYA-
OSHADHEESHU, PAYO DIVYANTARIKSHE
PAYODHAAHAA, PAYASWATEEHI PRADISHAH
SANTU MAHYAMMA.**

4. OM! VISHNO RARAATAMASIVISHNOHO,
SHNAPTRESTHO VISHNOHO, SYOORASI-
VISHNORDHRUVOSI VAISHNAVAMASI VISHNAVE TWAA.

5. OM! AGNIRDEVATAA-VATODEVATAA, SOORYO
DEVATAA, CHANDRAMAA DEVATAA, VASAVO DEVATAA,
RUDRAA DEVATAA, AADITYAA DEVATAA, MARUTO
DEVATAA, VISHWEDEVAA DEVATAA, BRIHASPATTIR-
DEVATENDRO DEVATAA, VARUNO-O-O DEVATAA.

6. OM! DYAUHU SHAANTIRANTARIKSHA GWAM
SHAANTIHI, PRITHIVEE SHAANTIRAPAH
SHANTIROSHADHAYAH SHAANTIHL VANASPATAYAH
SHAANTIRVISHWEDEVAHAA, SHAANTI RBRAHMA
SHAANTIHI, SARVA GWAM SHAANTIHL, SHAANTI-REVA
SHAANTIHL, SAA-MAA SHAANTIREDH.

7. OM! VISHWAANIDEVA SAVITARDURITAANI
PARAASUWA. YAD BHADRAM TANNA AASUWA.

OM! SHAANTIHI ! SHAANTIHI !!

SHAANTIHI !!!

SARWAARISHTA SUSHAANTIRBHAWATU-U-U.

RAKSHAVIDHAANAM (Mantra for protection of *Yagya* and its participants)

Since in the process of *Yagya* beneficent powers of God are invoked, there are many invisible and visible forces which tend to create disturbance and make the devotee, physically and psychologically desist from the ritual. In ancient times these destructive forces appeared as demons (*Rakchasas*). Hence these *mantras* are pronounced to ward off such eventualities. Stand up and with the enunciation of corresponding *mantra*, sprinkle grains

of rice in ten directions (In the order: E.,SE., S.,SW., W.,NW.,N.,NE., Zenith, Nadir and all directions respectively)

1. **OM! POORVE RAKSHATU VAARAAHAH, (E)
AAGNEYAAM GARUDADHWAJAH. (SE)
DAKSHINE PADMANAABHASTU, (S)
NAIRRITYAAM MADHUSOODANAH. (SW)**
2. **PASHCHIME CHAIV GOVINDO, (W)
VAYAVYAAM TU JANAARDANAH. (NW)
UTTARE SHREEPATEE RAKSHET, (N)
AISHAANYAAM HI MAHESHWARAH. (NE)**
3. **OORDHWAM RAKSHATU DHAATAA VO, (ZENITH)
HYADHONANTASHCHA RAKSHATU. (NADIR)
ANUKTAMAPI YATSTHAANAM,
RAKSHATWISHO MAMAADRIDHRIK.**
4. **APASARPANTU TE BHOOTAA (ALL DIRECTIONS)
YE BHOOTAA BHOOMI SANSTHITAH
YE BHOOTAAH VIGHNA KARTAARAH,
TE GACHCHHANTU SHIVAAGYAYAA.**
5. **APAKRAAMANTU BHOOTAANI,
PISHAACHAAH SARVATODISHAM,
SARVESHAAMAVIRODHENA,
YAGYA KARMA SAMAARABHE.**

VIVAHA GHOSHANA

(Announcement of matrimonial ceremony)

The matrimonial ceremony is announced in a standard format in *Sanskrit*. The announcement mentions about the *Gotra* (Spiritual lineage referring to the *rishi*, who was initially accepted as the *Guru* of the clan to which

the person belongs.) If the *Gotra* is not known, name it as Bhardwaj the gotra of *Acharyashri* and gives the parental introduction (Names of father and grandfather) of the bride and the groom. It is declared that with this announcement the couple is formally entering into matrimony. With this announcement, everyone is being informed that after this ceremony the cohabitation of couple will have religious sanction. Here it may be mentioned that the Hindu society considers secretive love affairs and physical relationship undesirable from the point of view of ethics, religion and legality. If a couple intends to live as man and wife, it is mandatory to have it declared publicly. Any relationship with a person other than a lawful spouse, is considered a vice. The cohabitation of a man and a woman therefore requires a formal public announcement in a marriage ceremony.

**SWASTI SHREEMANNAND NANDAN CHARAN
KAMAL BHAKTI SADVIDYAA VINEET NIJKUL KAMAL
KALIKAA PRAKAASHANAIAK BHAASKAR SADAACHAAR
SACHCHARITRA SATKUL SATPRATISHTHAA
GARISHTHASYA..... GOTRASYA.....
MAHODAYASYA PRAPAUTRAH... .. MAHODAYASYA
PAURTAH MAHODAYASYA PUTRAH MAHODAYASYA
PRAPAUTREE MAHODAYASYA PAUTREE
MAHODAYASYA PUTREE. PRAYATPAANIHI SHARANAM
PRAPADYE. SWASTI SAMVADESP'OO BHAYOR-
VRIDDHIRVAR KANYAYOSHCHIRANJEEVINAU
BHOOYAASTAAM.**

MANGALA ASHTAKAM

With the following mantras, the multifarious super powers of God, their incarnations and manifestations in animate and inanimate elements of nature are invoked for creation of a favourable environment and a happy future life of the couple. The priest pronounces the mantras loudly and melodiously.

1. SHREEMATPANKAJAVISHTARO HARIHARAU,
VAYURMA HENDRO NALAH, CHNDRO BHAASKAR
VITTAPAL VARUNA, PRETAADHIPAADIGRAHAAH
PRADYUMNO NALAKOOBARAU SURGAJAH,
CHINTAAMANIHI KAUSTUBHAH, SWAAMI
SHAKTIDHARASHCHALANGALADHARAH, KURVANTU
VO MANGALAM.

2. GANGAA GOMATI GOPATIRGANPATIHI, GOVIND
GOVARDHANAU, GEETAA GOMAI GORAJAU GIRISUTAA,
GANGAA DHARO GAUTAMAHL GAAYATREE GARUDO
GADAADHARGAYAA, GAMBHEER GODAAVAREE,
GANDHARV GRIHA GOP GOKUL DHARAH, KURVANTU VO
MANGALAM.

3. NEIRAANAAM TRITAYAM MAHAT PASHUPATEH,
AGNESTUPAADATRAYAM, TATTADVISHNUPADATRAYAM
TRIBHUVANE, KHYAATAM CHA RAAMATRAYAM,
GANGAA BAAHUPATHATRAYAM SUVIMALAM,
VEDATRAYAM BRAAHMANAM, SANDHYAANAAM
TRITAYAM DWIJAIRABHIMATAM, KURVANTU VO
MANGALAM.

4. VAALMEEKIHI SANAKAH
SANANDANAMUNIHI, VYASO-VASHISHTHO

**BHRIGUHU, JABAALIRJAMADAGNIJAHNU JANAKO,
GARGONGIRA GAUTAMAH. MAANDHAATAA
BHARATO NRIPASHCHA SAGARO, DHANYO
DILEEPO NALAH, PUNYO DHARMASUTO YAYAATI
NAHUSHAU, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.**

**5. GAUREE SHREEKULADEVATAA CHA
SUBHAGAA KANDOO SUPARNAA SHIVAAH,
SAAVITREE CHA SARASWATEE CHA SURABHIHI,
SATYAVRATAARUNDHATEE. SWAAHAA JAAMBA-
VATI-CHA RUKMABHAGINEE,
DUHUSWAPNAVIDHVANSINEE; VELAA
CHAAMBUNDHEH SAMINAMAKARAA, KURVANTU
VO MANGALAM.**

**6. GANGAA SINDHU SARASWATEE CHA
YAMUNAA, GODAAVAREE NARMADAA; KAAVEREE
SARAYOO MAHENDRATANAYAA, CHARMANVATEE
VEDIKAA. SHIPRAA VETRAVATEE
MAHAASURANADEE, KHYAATAA-CHA-YAA
GANDAKEE; POORNAAH PUNYA-JALAIHI
SAMUDRASAHITAAH, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.**

**7. LAKSHMEEHI KAUSTUBH
PAARJAATAKSURAA, DHANVANTARISHCHAND-
RAMAA; GAAVAH KAAMDUGHAH SURESH-
WARAGAJO, RAMBHAADI DEVAANGANAHAH.
ASHWAH SAPTAMUKHAH SUDHAA HARIDHANUHU,
SHANKHO VISHAM CHAAMBUDHE; RATNAANEETI
CHATURDASH PRATIDINAM, KURVANTU VO
MANGALAM.**

**8. BRAHMAA VEDPATIHI SHIVAH
PASHUPATIHI, SOORYO GRAHAANAAM PATIHI;
SHUKRO DEVPANIRNALO NARAPATIHI,
SKANDASHCHA SENAAPATIHI. VISHNU**

**RYAGYAPATIRYAMAH PITRIPATIHI, TAARAAPATI
SHCHANDRAMAA, ITYETE PATAYASSUPARNA
SAHITAAH, KURVANTU VO MANGALAM.**

PARASPAR UPAHAAR- VASTROPAHAAR

(Presentation of clothes and ornaments)

According to tradition, the families of the groom and bride exchange gifts, clothes, ornaments etc. on the occasion of marriage. This is ceremoniously carried out before the beginning of the main function. The clothes and ornaments are worn by the couple before they are seated on the matrimonial altar. This ceremony may be performed symbolically by exchanging yellow scarves (*Dupatta*). Where there is an insistence on ornaments, it would be decent if the couple is made to wear light, inexpensive auspicious ornaments only like rings and *Mangalsootra* (A gold necklace with beads worn by married women in India)

While making the other partner wear the ornaments, let either couple conceptualize that through this act each is appreciating the sanctity of the responsibility for augmenting the honour and presentability of the partner, increasing the status of the spouse in society and taking a pledge for the same. This exchange of gifts takes place with recitation of following mantra by the priest.

**OM! PARIDHAASYAI YASHODHAASYAI,
DEERGHAA-YUTWAAY JARADASHHIRASHMI, SHATAM
CHA JEEVAAMI SHARADAH, PUROOCHEE-**

RAAYASPOSHMABHI SAMYA-YISHYE.**PUSHPOPHAAR MAALYAARPAN****Garlanding**

Conceding mutual compatibility, the bride and the groom garland each other. The bride having preference, precedes the groom (The flowers in the garlands signify goodwill and virtues of the person holding the garland which are being exchanged with the partner). During the process, let the couple conceptualize that through this act they are taking a vow to make up for the shortcomings of the person being garlanded by one's own virtues and remain emotionally harmonious in each action like the flowers tied in the garland; that in this objective they will succeed with the blessings of divine powers and enlightened persons present on the occasion. Let the bride garland the groom first.

**OM! YASHASAA MAADYAAVAA PRITHIVEE,
YASHASENDRAA-BRIHASPATEE, YASHO BHAGASHCHA
MAA VIDADYASHO MAA PRATIPADYATAAM**

HASTAPEET KARANAM

(Colouring the hands of bride yellow)

The ritual of *Hastapeet karanam* precedes (with a paste prepared by adding turmeric to water) by her guardians and close relatives. The teenage girl to be married will soon become a woman in charge of a household. Yellow colour is considered auspicious and

symbolical of creativity (c.f. blooming of yellow flowers in spring). The maiden, who had so far lived under the tender and affectionate care of her parents, is not accustomed to taking heavy responsibilities. After marriage she will become responsible for many new creative ventures (e.g. motherhood and rearing of the children). Hence her hands should now assume a different complexion. Besides being auspicious, the yellow colour also symbolizes the divine power of creativity and prosperity (*Lakshmi*). While colouring the hands of the bride, her parents and guardians symbolically motivate her and emotionally prepare her for the new creative role, which she is going to play in future with divine assistance and for which she is required to make her hands i.e. herself stronger and more propitious.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Let the guardians and relatives (who are to take part in *Kanyadan* letter) smear the turmeric paste on the hands of the bride with enunciation of the mantra. Conceptualize that in the presence of divine powers, her hands are being cleansed of the bad traits of selfishness and are being strengthened with the motivation for sacrificing personal interests for acts of benevolence. Also let the bride take a silent resolve to make hard endeavour to strengthen and persevere this new trait.

**OM! AHIRIV BHOGAIH PARYETI BAAHUM,
JYAAYA AHETIM PARIBAADHAMAANA.H.**

**HASTAGHNO VISHWAA VAYUNAANI VIDVAAN
PUMAAN PUMAA GWAM SAM PARIPAATU
VISHVATAH.**

KANYAADAAN GUPTADAAN

(Handing over charge of bride to the new guardians
and secret donation)

DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION

GUPTADAAN-

During the process of *Kanyadan*, it is customary to give an undeclared amount (or ornament) to the bride. It is handed over to her concealed in a lump of *Aata* (Kneaded flour). In fact this is the traditional form of dowry. While bidding farewell to the bride, the guardians give her some cash or ornament as gift which may be required by her in moments of contingency. This gift is absolutely private and remains a secret between the donor and the receiver bride. Other persons are neither expected to know, nor inquire about this gift. The In-laws of the bride have no right to suggest, demand or inquire about this dowry. Nor there is any need for its exhibition, since the donation is given by persons (who may be rich or poor) according to their financial status and convenience and it is not supposed to instigate discontentment or appreciation from any quarter whatsoever. Besides, if the amount becomes public it is likely to generate a trend of emulation and competition creating social problems. The bride's people, in such a case would also be exposed to

undue pressure and if the amount is considered inadequate, the groom's party will get an opportunity to behave impudently. Hence, while giving directives in regard to donation of contingent amount to the bride, the farsighted *Rishis*, (keeping in view the possibility of misuse of this custom by greedy persons for personal gains or for some other menial objective) introduced a proviso about total secrecy of dowry and discussion on the subject was strictly forbidden. For the sake of convention, it is sufficient today to conceal a one rupee coin in *Aata* for *Guptdan*.

KANYAADAAN

Kanyadan means transfer of responsibilities pertaining to physical and emotional requirements of the bride by her guardians to the bridegroom and his people. Until her marriage, the parents of the girl are totally responsible for upbringing, development, security, happiness, counselling, consoling and encouraging the girl. After marriage, her husband and his relatives will have to undertake these responsibilities. With the rite of *Kanyadan*, it is being ensured that in the new environment of household of her husband, the bride does not find herself as a forlorn stranger and on the contrary continues to receive the same affection, cooperation, goodwill and attention which she was getting from her parents. While agreeing to take part in *Kanyadan* and taking the responsibilities ensuing from betrothal, the bridegroom and his guardians must sincerely appreciate that

henceforth they are becoming sincerely answerable to the society for these duties which they will have to perform in all eventualities.

Here it is necessary to explain, that *Kanyadan* does not mean a conventional *Daan* as is literally meant in case of various types of donations made in cash or kind (*Daan* of property, livestock etc.) The bride cannot be treated like property since only later can be donated to any person for exploitation as one likes. Each human being appears in this world as an independent entity and has a characteristic environment of one's own. No human being therefore has any right to donate or sell another of his kind. Even parents do not own their children as property. If it transpires, it would only tantamount to negation of independent natural existence, a contravention of human right. Marriage is a bilateral agreement to be sincerely and honestly followed by the bride and the bridegroom. Viewing the spouse as an object of merchandise, whether sold, purchased or bartered and behaving like an owner would only mean a violation of human rights. *Kanyadan* is never meant as such. The ritual has only one objective i.e. to ensure continuation of a congenial environment for the bride.

On entering a new household and living amongst total strangers, the psychologically tender bride has to face many problems of adjustment. Hence in this initial transitional period of change in environment, the household members of the groom must be specially careful about the greater need of affection and assistance to the

bride. Bride's people may also not become totally indifferent to the bride after marriage. They are also expected to contribute throughout for the betterment of her future.

With *Kanyadan*, the spiritual-lineage of the bride (*Gotra*-named after the primary *Guru* of the clan) is also changed and after marriage she is considered as belonging to the *Gotra* of her husband. With recitation of *mantra*, divine powers are invoked to provide emotional strength to the couple for happily adjusting to the changed environment. After the invocation *mantra*, the speaker (who is taking the pledge) places both hands of the bride joined together-palms upwards in the hands of the groom held underneath the hands of the bride in a similar manner.

KANYAADAAN SANKALP (The pledge)

ADYETL..... NAAMAAMHAM
NAAMNIMIMAAM KANYAAM/
BHAGINEEM SUSNAATAAM YATHAASHAKTI
ALANKRITAAM GANDHAADI ARCHITAAM
VASTRAYUGACHCHNANNAAM PRAJAAPATI
DAIVATYAAM SHATGUNEEKRIT JYOTISH-
TOMAATIRAATRA- SHATFAL PRAAPTI
KAAMOHAM NAMNE VISHNUROOPINE
VARAAI BHARAN POSHAN AACHCHHADAN
PAALNAADEENAM SWAKEEYAUTTARDAAYITWA
BHAARAMAKHILAMADYA TAVA PATNEETWEN
TUBHYAMAHAM SAMPRADADE.

Conceding the groom says.

OM SWASTL.

GAUDAAN

(Donation of a Cow)

A cow is symbolical of purity and dedication to benevolence. Whatever is given as gift by bride's people must be associated with purity of thoughts and a genuine desire to help. The donation itself be such as to motivate the receiver in endeavours for becoming pure and benevolent. If the bride's parents find it convenient to give and those of the groom have adequate place for looking after, a cow may be gifted during the ritual of *Kanyadan*. It would be an appropriate gift for promotion of health in bride's family.

This age-old tradition of *Gaudan* must be kept alive. If in the changed social scenario of modern times, the giver or the receiver finds it inconvenient to maintain a cow, some amount in cash or an ornament may be given during *Kanyadan* in lieu of *Gaudan*.

**OM! MAATAA RUDRAANAAM DUHITAA
VASOONAAM SWASAADITYAANAAMAMRITASYA-
NAABHIHI. PRANU VOCHAM CHIIKITUSHE
JANAAI MAA GAAMANAAGAAMADITIM
VADHISHTA.**

MARYAADAAKARNAM

(Binding in discipline)

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION:-

After the *Kanyadan-Gaudan*, the participants of these rituals make an humble appeal to the bridegroom in the presence of gentlemen of society and invited divine powers as witness, to behave with humility after getting married. The groom concedes to this request. This special ritual has been prescribed to ensure a specific code of behaviour conforming to norms decided by ancient *Rishis* for civilized and disciplined living. Since after marriage the groom receives additional rights, there is a likelihood of inflation in his ego and possibilities of misappropriation of advantages. Therefore with this rite the groom is asked to keep inviolate the limits defined by the *Rishis* in matters pertaining to religion, resources and sex. The request is made very humbly and the groom happily conveys his acceptance.

ACTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION-

Let the participants (who have taken part in *Kanyadan* earlier) take flowers, rice, grains and little water in the right hand and conceptualize that they are motivating the groom for a disciplined behaviour. While promising to be disciplined, the groom invokes the divine powers to help him in the venture.

Let the participants pronounce the following *mantra*:

**OM! GAUREEM KANYAAMIMAAM PUJYA !
 YATHAA SHAKTI VIBHOOSHITAAM. GOTRAAI
 SHARMANE TUBHYAM, DATTAAM DEV
 SAMAASHRAYA. DHARMASYAACHARANAM
 SAMYAK, KRIYATAAMANAYAA SAH
 DHARME CHAARTHE CHA KAAME CHA, YATWAM
 NAATICHARE VIBHO.**

The groom concedes by saying:

NAATICHARAAML

PAANIGRAHAN

(Becoming hand in glove : joining hands)

After the groom has conveyed his willingness to abide by the codes of marital disciplines, the bride and the groom are made to clasp each others' right hands. This is the gesture of *Panigrahan*. The action is like shaking hands as though one is reassuring the other person. Conceptualization is similar to that during *Kanyadan*. While letting the bride hold his hands the groom too feels that henceforth the coordinating nucleus of his character, desires, ambitions and activities, which was so far his own self, will be his wife and he will be assisting her in this venture by relinquishing these exclusive personal rights in favour of his bride.

The moment husband and wife resolve to move hand in hand and motivate each other in the knowledge

of respectable members of the society, the basic objective of marriage is achieved.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

When the *mantra* is pronounced, let the bride extend her right hand towards the groom, who then clasps her hand (alongwith the thumb) in his hands. During the process, both conceptualize that in the auspicious environment of the ceremony, they are accepting responsibility for each other with a feeling of love and understanding.

**OM! YADAISHI MANASHAA DOORAM,
DISHONU-PAVAMAANO VAA. HIRANYAPARNO
VAIKARNAH, SA TWAA MANMANASAAM KAROTU
ASAU.**

GRANTHI BANDHAN

(Tying the nuptial knot)

In the process of *Panigrahan* the bride and the groom had given mutual reassurance of support. Now it is the turn of society to strengthen this bondage. The bond is symbolically established by tying a knot between the scarves worn by the bride and the groom, which means creation of a new entity, comprising a set of two bodies and two minds. Now each one of the couple becomes a complement of the other.

Alongwith the knot are tied five articles, namely a coin, flower, green grass (*Doorva*), turmaric (*Haridra*) and

rice grains (Akchat).

The coin indicates that neither of the couple could have exclusive, personal, proprietary rights in financial matters. That irrespective of personal income, neither of earning members would have absolute freedom of expenditure. From now onwards, there will be a joint ownership of the earnings and property. The planning and mode of expenditure would be decided after mutual consultation and agreement.

Doorva symbolizes an everlasting, active, live, feeling of love. Grass never loses its biological characteristic of growth. A little sprinkling of water makes dry grass green. Let the matrimonial bond be ever green like grass with either couple having infinite love and fellowship for the other person throughout life. Let each partner consider one's own discomforts and sufferings insignificant in comparison to those of the spouse and take greater care of the conveniences and happiness of the other person. Let there be a constant overflow, exuberance of love from the depths of one heart to the other.

Haridra symbolises health. Let each spouse constantly endeavour to improve the physical and mental health of the other to maximum extent. Let neither behave in a manner detrimental to the health of the other person. Nor should one act to create emotional stress for the other.

Akchat in the knot reminds the couple of their multifarious responsibilities towards various groups of people and society as a whole. The married couple will have

a circle of close friends and relatives. It is the joint responsibility of husband and wife to take appropriate care in maintaining a congenial relationship with them individually and collectively. Paying greater attention to one or a few, disregarding others is not advisable. Besides, it is also the responsibility of each conscientious human being to look after the society as well, apart from one's own family. Let neither of couple compel or confine other in activities for the sake of one's own selfish interest. Nor should one deprive the partner of opportunities of social service in context of time, resources and assistance. The concept symbolised in Grains of rice in the knot is that you are not merely made for each other but the responsibilities and commitments towards the society are also tied up with your matrimonial bond as a very significant objective. (A sapling grown out of a grain of rice when transplanted elsewhere grows to produce thousands of grains. Similarly the goodwill and benevolent acts transplanted by the couple in society would generate the same attributes in many a person.)

Flowers in the knot apprise the couple of the necessity to be always smiling, relaxed and radiate happiness and fragrance of virtues, so that their company becomes enjoyable. Let each amongst the couple persistently make an endeavour to keep the other person happy and keep on fondling and caressing. Let either work for spreading the fragrance of name and fame of the partner far and wide and be everready to praise even trivialities. One should be specially careful to avoid disgracing or

showing indifference to the spouse in presence of other persons. Thus this nuptial knot with the five auspicious articles is meant to remind the married couple for ever about the real objectives of matrimony.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION:

Let the knot be tied by the *Acharya (Priest)*, a representative of the *Acharya* or some other respectable person. Bringing the corners of the two draperies worn by the bride and the groom together, tie a knot with the five auspicious articles. Conceptualizing that the invocation of divine powers is making these articles effective in augmenting righteousness and goodwill and creating a strong bond between the marrying persons to enable them achieve the objective of matrimony successfully.

Pronounce the following *mantra* while tying the knot:

**OM! SAMANJANTU VISHVEDEVAAHAA,
SAMAPO HRIDAYAANI NAU. SAM
MAATARISHWAA SAM DHAATAA, SAMUDESHTREE
DADHAATU NAU.**

THE OATH-TAKING CEREMONY

DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION

The event of taking charge of an important office is essentially associated with an oath-taking ceremony. By way of performance of rites of *Kanyadan*, *Panigrahan*, and *Granthi Bandhan*, the bride, groom

and society express their approval of the matrimonial union of the couple. Thereafter, are performed a series of rites for scriptural moulding of the two individuals into a joint unit of amalgamated personality. The process takes place in presence of sanctified fire and divine powers as witness. In the ritual they are made to understand in detail their individual responsibilities and take a pledge to shoulder them together sincerely and faithfully. In this context it is to be kept in mind that the duties of the bridegroom are primary and for this reason he is made to take the oath before the bride.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALISATION

While taking oath the groom and the bride are given flowers, rice and a little water in hand. The priest pronounces the *mantra* related to the oath in *Sanskrit* explaining in vernacular. On completion of each oath, the oath-taker is asked to convey acceptance by saying *I promise* in *Sanskrit*. Thereafter, he oblates the rice, grains and flowers on the alter.

OATHS FOR THE BRIDEGROOM:

**1- DHARMA PATNEE MILITWAIVA,
HYEKAM JEEVANAMAAYOH. ADYAA-
RABHYA YATO ME TWAMARDDHANGINEETI
GHOSHITAA.**

From this moment, declaring the bride as my better-half and amalgamating my personality with that of

my wife, I am creating a new living entity. I shall take as much care of my wife, as I do for parts of my own body.

2- SWEEKAROMI SUKHEN TWAAM, GRIHLAKSHMI MAHANTATAH. MAN-TRAYITWAA VIDHAASYAAMI, SUKAARYAANI TWAYAA- SAH.

I am happily handing over the significant authority for financial management of my household to my wife and promise to consider her views and suggestions in all matters of life significant.

3. ROOP SWAASTHYA SWABHAA-VAANTU, GUNADOSHAADEN SARVATAH. ROGAAGYAAN VIKARAASHCHA, TAVA VISMRTIYA CHETASAH.

I shall not develop or nurture any aversion towards my wife on account of conditions related to her appearance, beauty, health, natural traits, disease or mistakes due to her ignorance. Nor shall I express discontentment in this context. I shall also maintain a cordial relationship with her by either patiently and lovingly making attempts for improvement in any shortcomings in her or make adjustments otherwise.

4-SAHACHARO BHAVISHYAAMI, POORNA SNEHAM PRADAAITE. SATYATAA MAM NISHTHAA CHA, YAS YAADHAARAM BHAVISHYATI.

I shall always be a close friend of my wife and also show maximum possible affection to her. I shall follow this pledge faithfully in letter and spirit.

**5-YATHAA PAVITRA CHITTEN, PAATIVRATYAM
DHRITAM VRATAM. TATHAIV PALAYISHYAAMI,
PATNIVRAT MAHAM DHRUVAM.**

I shall strictly follow the codes of behaviour specified for a husband in reciprocation of those made for a wife. I shall neither think of nor indulge in adultery.

**6-GRIHASYAARTHA VYAVASTHAAYAAM,
MANTRA YITWAA TWAYAA SAH. SANCHALANAM
KARISHYAAMI, GRIHASTHOCHIT JEEVANAM.**

In domestic matters, I shall let my wife have upper hand and adopt a life-style becoming of an ideal householder by making a family budget in consultation with my spouse.

**7-SAMRIDDHI SUKH SHAANTINAAM,
RAKSHANAAM TATHAA TAV. VYAVASTHAAM
SANKARISHYAAMI, SWA SHAKTI
VAIBHAVAADIBHIH.**

I shall faithfully utilize my strength and resources in making arrangements for pleasure, peace, progress and protection of my wife.

8-YATNASHEELO BHAVISHYAAMI, SANMAARG SEVITUM SADAA. AAVAYOH MATBHEDAANSHCHA, DOSHAANSAN SHODHYA SHAANTITAH.

I shall unilaterally make every possible effort to keep my own behaviour towards my wife exemplary and resolve all differences and mistakes peacefully. I shall neither blame, insult nor ignore my wife in the company of other persons.

9-DEVAGNI SANMANUSHYAANAAM, SAANNIDHYE KRITANISHCHAYAH. TWAAM PRATYAHAM BHAVISHYAAMI, SAHISHNUHU MRIDULASTATHAA.

With the divine powers, sacred fire and gentlemen as witness, I take a pledge to be tolerant and soft spoken with my wife.

10-BHAVATYAAMASAMARTHAAYAAM, VIMUKHAA YAANCHA KARMANI VISHWAASAM SAHYOGANCH, MAM PRAAPASYASI TWAM SADAA.

I give an assurance that even in the event of my wife becoming infirm, invalid or finding her indifferent towards her responsibilities due to some reason, I shall not deviate in the least from my own responsibilities and continue to extend my cooperation to her.

11-MADHURAA PREM SANYUKTAAM, VAARTAA SATYAVYAVHRITIM. DRIDHAM

PATNIVRATMEKAM VACHO ME TAV SANNIDHAU.

I pledge to remain sweet and affectionate during conversation with my wife and in course of my behaviour with her. I also promise to be strictly faithful to her.

OATHS FOR THE BRIDE

**1-SWAJEEVANAM MELAYITWAA,
BHAVATAH KHALU JEEVANE. BHOOTWAA
CHAARDHAANGINEE NITYAM, VASISHYAAMI
GRIHE SADAA.**

Amalgamating my life-style with that of my husband, I shall create a new entity of human existence. In this way I shall always be living as his true better-half (*Ardhangini*)

**2-SHISHTATAA POORVAKAM SARVAIH,
PARIWAAR JANAIH SAH. AUDAARYEN
VIDHAASYAAMI VYAVAHAARAM CHA
KOMALAM.**

I shall always consider all friends and members of my husband's family as integrated units of one system, maintain cordial relationship with all of them, serve them open heartedly and behave with them sweetly.

**3- TYAKTVALASYAM KARISHYAAMI,
GRIHKARYE PARISHRAMAM. BHARTUR-
HARSHAM HI GYAASYAAMI, SWEEYAAMEV**

PRASANNATAM.

Resisting indolence, I shall perform domestic chores laboriously. In this way, I shall extend appropriate cooperation to my husband in his progress and betterment of standard of living.

4-SHRADDHAYAA PAALAYISHYAAMI, DHARMAM PAATIVRATAM PARAM. SARVADAIVAANUKOOLYEN, PATYURAADESHAPAALIKA.

I shall remain faithful to my husband; be always favourable to him respectfully; shall never be hypocritical in my behaviour towards him. I shall also make it a habit to follow his advice and instructions in letter and spirit promptly.

5-SUSHROOSHANAPARAA SWACHCHHAA, MADHURPRIYABHAASHINI PRATJJAANE BHAVISHYAAMI SATATAM SUKHADAAYINEE.

I shall cultivate virtues of selfless service, cleanliness, pleasantry and sweet-conversation. On the other hand, I shall carefully avoid development of vices and bad habits like jealousy, nagging and grumbling. In this way, I shall always make my presence pleasurable.

6-MITAVYAYEN GAARHA STHYASANCHALANE HINITYADAA. PRAYATISHYE CHA SOTSAAHAM, TAVAAHAMANUGAAMINEE.

I shall manage domestice requirements by keep-

ing the house-hold expenditure to a minimum. I shall avoid extravagance. In spite of my husband becoming financially or physically weak, I shall enthusiastically continue to follow disciplines of an ideal house-holder.

**7-DEVASWAROPO NAARINAM, BHARTAA
BHAWATI MANAVAH. MATVETTIVAM BHAJISHYAMI,
NIYATA JEEVANAA-VADHIM.**

Regarding my husband as a representative of God, sent as a life-long companion, I shall overlook differences of opinion with him and remain active throughout my life in rendering services due of me. I shall never insult or ignore my husband publicly or privately.

**8-POOJYAASTAVA PITARO YE,
SHRADDHAYAA PARAMAA HI ME. SEVAYAA
TOSHAYISHYAMI, TAANSADA VINAYEN CHA.**

I shall always keep all those persons contented with my service and humility who are held in high esteem by my husband and are dear and near to him.

**9-KADAAPI KWAAPI KIMAPI, KARISHYE NA
PARANGMUKHEE. PRATI JAANAAMI MAM CHA,
TWAMEVA SARVAMEVA HI.**

At all moments of life and under all circumstances, even on temporal estrangement, I shall continue to perform my duties towards my husband without expecting anything in return.

YAGYA

After taking the oaths, for ingraining the concepts in the nature and mind of the couple and nurturing them further, an environment of spirituality is created by making them take part in a *Yagya*.

The standard procedure of *Gaytri Yagya* consists of the following rituals successively.

AGNISTHAAPANAM

Enunciating the following mantra, honorably and with reverence take embers or burning camphor in a spoon or some small vessel and place it in the *Havan Kund* (receptacle for lighting fire for oblations).

**OM! BHOOR BHUVAH SWARDYAU RIVA BHOMNA,
PRITHIVEEVA VARIMNAA. TASYAASTE PRITHIVI
DEVAYAJANI, PRISHTHEGNIMANNADAMANNA-
DYAAYAA DADHE, AGNIM DOOTAM PURODADHE.
HAVYAVAAHAMUPABRUVI DEVAAM-AASAA-
DAYAADIH, OM AGNAYE NAMAH AVAAHAYAAMI,
STHAAPAYAAMI, POOJAYAAMI, GANDHAAKSHATAM
PUSHPAANI DHOOPAM DEEPAM NAIVEDYAM
SAMARPAYAAMI**

AGNI PRADEEPANAM

Now further ignite the fire into a leaping flame by adding small pieces of wood and camphor and airing it

with a hand-held fan.

**OM! UDBUDHYASWAAGNE PRATI JAGRIHL,
TWA MISHTAA POORTE-SA-GWAM
SRIJETHAAMAYAMCHA. ASMINTSADHASTHE
ADHUTTARASMIN, VISHWEDEVAA
YAJAMAANASHCHA SEEDATA.**

SAMIDHAA DHAANAM

Now take four *Samidhas* (15-30 cm. long slender pieces of wood) and dipping either ends in *Ghee* (butter-oil) oblate them in the burning fire with the following *mantras* successively. The *Samidhas* are held between the thumb, ring finger and middle finger of the right hand and while placing them in fire the wrist is turned upwards.

1- **OM! AYANTA IDHMA AATMAA,
JAATAVEDASTENEDHYASWA VARDHASWA,
CHEDDHAVAR- DHAYA CHAASMAAN PRAJAYAA,
PASHUBHIR BRAHMAVAR-CHASE NAANNAADYEN
SAMEDHEYA SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE JAATAVEDASE
IDAM NA MAMA.**

2- **OM! SAMIDHAAGNIM DUVASYATA, GHRITAIRBO
DHAYATAATITHIM. AASMIN HAVYAA JUHOTANA
SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**

3- **OM! SUSAMIDDHAAI SHOCHISHE, GHRITAM**

**TEEVRAM JUHOTANA. AGNAYE JAATAVEDASE SWAAHAA.
IDAMAGNAYE JAATVEDASE IDAM NAMAM.**

**4- OM! TAM TWA SAMIDBHIRANGIRO, GHRITEN
VARDHAYAAMASL BRIHACHCHHOCHA YAVISHTHYA
SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE ANGIRASE IDAM NA MAM.**

JAL PRASECHANAM

Holding water in the *Prokshani* (a wooden spoon-shaped instrument with the smaller arm) pour water successively on the eastern, western, northern borders of the *Kund* and thereafter all around it along with enunciation of respective *mantras*.

OM! ADITENUMANYASWA. (EAST WARDS)

**OM! ANUMATENUMANYASWA
(WEST WARDS)**

**OM! SARASWATYANUMANYASWA (NORTH
WARDS)**

**OM! DEVA SAVITAH PRASUVA YAGYAM, PRASUVA
YAGYAPATIM BHAGAAL. DIVYO GANDHARVAH
KETPOOHOO, KETAM NAH PUNAATU,
VAACHASPATIRVAACHAM NAH SWADATU-U-U.**

AAJYAAHUTIHI

Where *Yagyas* are performed elaborately on a large scale for large number of participants, oblations are of-

ferred to all divine powers, whereas in case of small ceremonies only seven oblations are given with *Ghee*. After each oblation, the left-over *Ghee* in the *Sruva* (a pencil-shaped wooden instrument with an obloid head at one end with a hole in it for holding *Ghee* for oblations) is dropped in the water kept in *Praneeta* (a rectangular spoon kept for the purpose) with enunciation of *Idam na mama* at the end of each *mantra*. Drops of *Ghee* collected in *Praneeta* will be used later for *Avghran*.

- 1) **OM! PRAJAAPATAYE SWAAHAA. IDAM PRAJAAPATAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 2) **OM! INDRAAI SWAAHAA. IDAM INDRAAI IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 3) **OM! AGNAYE SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 4) **OM! SOMAAI SWAAHAA. IDAM SOMAAI IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 5) **OM! BHOOHU SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 6) **OM! BHUVAH SWAAHAA. IDAM VAYAVE IDAM NA MAMA.**
- 7) **OM! SWAH SWAAHAA. IDAM SOORYAI IDAM NA MAMA.**

GAYATREE MANTRA AHUTIHI

Now give twenty-four oblations with *Gayatri Mantra*. The oblations with *Ghee* are given with the help of *Shruva*. Other oblations with the *Havishya* (a mixture of herbs and other ingredients) are given by the persons

participating in the *Yagya* with right hand, holding the *Havishya* in the ring-finger, middle finger and thumb, wrist turned upwards.

**OM! BHOOR BHUWAH SWAH TATSAVITUR
VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI DHIYO
YO NAHA PRACHODAYAAT. IDAM GAYATRYAI
IDAM NAMAMA.**

PRAAYASHCHITYA HOMAH
(*PENITENTIAL OBLATIONS*)

DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION:

Five additional oblations are given with *Gayatri Mantra* as a penance for pre-existing retrogressive traits of personality. The oblations are made simultaneously by the groom with *Ghee* and by the bride with *Havishya*. During the process both conceptualize that whichever of their earlier negative tendencies are likely to hamper the development of a happy conjugal relationship, are being burnt to ash alongwith each oblation. Pre-marital intimate relationship with the opposite sex, if any, may be forgotten (and forgiven) like an unpleasant dream. Now onwards for such affairs of past life, neither would blame the other spouse nor would memories thereof cast shadows on present married life or make one accuse the other partner of misdemeanour. With this ritual, the couple is also bound to get rid of addictions like drug abuse, drunkenness, intoxication and smoking. The repentance for the

past mistakes is also associated with a pledge to desist from repetition of the same in future, so that progress in married life does not face any hurdles.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

While making oblations in fire with *mantras*, let the bride and the groom think that with each penitential oblation, the inner-self is being cleansed of the imprints of vicious acts and thoughts of earlier life. Submit the oblations with pronouncement of *Swaha* and bow with folded hands after *Idam Na Mama*.

**OM! TWAM NO AGNE VARUNASYA
VIDWAAN, DEVASYA HEDO AVAYAA
SISEESHTHAAHAA. YAJISHTHO VAHNITAMAH
SHOSHUCHAANO, VISHWAA DWESHAA GWAM SI
PRAMUMUGDHYASMATA SWAAHAA.
IDAMAGNEE VARUNAABHYAAM IDAM NA MAMA.**

**OM! SA TWAM NO AGNEVAMO BHAVOTI,
NEDISHTHO ASYAA USHASO VYUSHTAU.
AVAYAKSHVA NO VARUNA GWAM RARAANO,
VEEHI MRIDEEKA GWAM SUHAVO NA EDHI
SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNEE VARUNABHYAM IDAM NA
MAMA.**

**OM! AYAASHCHAAGNESYA
NABHISHASTIPAASHCHA, SATYAMITWAMAYAA-ASI,
AYAA NO YAGYAM VAHAASYAYAA, NO DHEHI
BHESHAJA GWAM SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE AYASE
IDAM NA MAMA.**

**OM! YE TE SHATAM VARUN YE SAHASRAM,
YAGIYAAHA PAASHAAVITATAA MAHAANTAH.
TEBHIRNOADYA SAVTOTA VISHNUHU, VISHWE
MUNCHANTU MARUTAH SWARKAAHAA SWAAHAA.
IDAM VARUNAAI SAVITRE VISHNAVE VISHWEBHYO
DEVEBHYO MARUD BHYAH SWARKEBHYASHCHA IDAM
NA MAMA.**

**OM! UDUTTAMAM VARUNA PAASHAMAS
MADVAADHAMAM, VIMADHYAMA GWAM
SHRATHAI ATHAAVAYAMAADITYA VRATE
TAWAANAAGASO, ADITAYE SYAAM SWAAHAA.
IDAM VARUNAAYAA-DITYAADITAYE CHA IDAM
NA MAMA.**

SHILAAROHANAM

The ritual of *Shilaarohanam* is like putting a stamp on the document of oaths taken by the couple. With it, the bride and the groom reaffirm the resolve to stand as a rock against all future eventualities. (The reader is reminded of the well-known episode of *Ramayana*, wherein *Angad*- the emissary of *Ram*, had dared *Ravan* to move his firmly-placed foot). Through this ritual, the participant-couple is also asked to take the oath of matrimony seriously and not merely as casual statements to be forgotten on the least pretext. The solemn promises made during the ceremony are expected to withstand pressure and last for ever.

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION:

With the pronouncement of *mantra*, the bride and the groom place their right foot together on a piece of rock and conceptualize that the combination of their firm resolve and divine grace is providing them strength to shoulder responsibilities and overcome obstacles in married life.

**OM! AAROHAMASHMAANAMASHMEVA
TWA GWAM STHIRAA BHAVA. ABHITISHTHA
PRITANYATOVABAADHASWA PRITANAAYATAH.**

LAAJAAHOMAH

The next rite is a combined process of *Laajahoma* and *Parikramaa* by the couple around the sacred fire in which the brother of the bride (or a close cousin) also takes part.

On completion of each cycle of circumambulation *Parikramaa* of the couple around the fire, the brother of the bride standing aside hands over a handful of baked corns of paddy (from a plate held in hand) to his sister (bride), who in turn gives it in the hands of the groom. The groom then oblates these corns into the sacred fire *Laajaahome* alongwith pronouncement of *mantra*. The process is repeated three times. Thrice the bride hands over the corns to the groom after successive cycles of circumambulation and on each occasion the groom oblates them in fire. With this rite, the bride symbolically informs the groom, that whatever has been received by

her from her parental home for her personal use, she is not holding secretly for her own sake only, but sharing it with her husband. This act of the bride is a reciprocation of husband's commitment according to which he too is expected to share his earnings with his spouse. In this way the couple share their achievements without any reservation and are not secretive about them. The act of the groom in oblation signifies his sense of self-respect in refusing to accept anything that is not acquired by his own personal endeavours. In this way the couple indicates the resolve to depend on their own endeavour rather than sustain on donations from someone else. On burning in fire, material becomes gaseous and disseminates in the atmosphere for all and sundry. Thus in the process, on giving oblations in fire, is imbibed a great ideal i.e. one must not accept anything free and even if something is acquired in this manner, it must be spent for the benefit of the masses. In fact this itself is the objective of many other occasions of public feasting. The purpose of mass-banquets after the death of either parents or a relative in family was (in ancient days) to ensure the utilization of inheritance for sustenance of such classes of society as the *Brahmins*, who were fully engaged in social welfare activities. The sentiments of guardians of the bride in giving her gifts in cash and kind as *Jowry* for her own use may be appreciated, but there is no justification for the husband or her in-laws in demanding or utilisation thereof for their personal requirements. A self-respecting, self-dependent individual would

never accept such free gifts. Besides, a conscientious person knows that unearned money and that too given by someone in a spirit of benevolence tends to make one indolent and counterproductive. It is therefore advisable to utilize free gifts and donation for the welfare of society only. *Yagya* signifies this very ideology. There is an established tradition amongst the *Hindus* to donate substantially in cash and kind on all auspicious occasions.

It would be much more justifiable to distribute all free gifts amongst those who need them. In so magnificent a heritage from ancient Indian culture, the inhuman demands of dowry from bride's guardians, by today's money greedy Shylocks, who would like to collect the last drop of blood from the former, appears in sharp contrast. In fact, the guardians of bridegroom should be gratefully obliged from the very core of their heart to the parents of bride, who part with their most precious possession—a part of their own flesh and blood. The groom and his people should, in fact, seek every possible opportunity to express their gratitude in reciprocation of this extraordinary gesture. The prevalent trend in any quarter of the society of conniving to inflict physical and mental torture and exploitation during marriage ceremonies only indicates that established tradition is being blatantly violated and religion is being totally ignored. This ritual of *Laajaahome* is specially meant to strike hard on such regressive trends in the society so that people view *dowry* in the right perspective.

PARIKRAMAA**(Circumambulations)**

Let the bride and the groom perform circumambulations around the sacred fire moving clockwise. In the first four cycles, the groom moves behind the bride and thereafter in the remaining three, the order is reversed. The relevant mantra is pronounced during each circumambulation and on completion of each cycle an oblation is given by both persons with *Gayatri Mantra*. The initial order of circumambulation signifies the leadership and priority of wife in domestic and family matters, in which, the husband follows wife's advice. It is also natural, since a woman is naturally adept and experienced in this field. The later circumambulations carried out with the groom in the lead, show the need for experience and guidance of husband in other matters including business beyond home, which is generally a man's domain. Nevertheless, in either case, decisions are to be taken after mutual consultations. Either of the couple are advised to develop greater expertise in the field of activities of the spouse.

Nature has made a clear distinctions in the areas of excellence of man and woman. A woman has greater tenderness of heart, more capacity to love and emotional reactivity than man. Man, on the other hand, has more physical strength and dexterity of action. In human life both aspects have a relevant place. Nevertheless, in overall view, a woman's status, dignity and opinion in human

life has greater significance. For this reason, the bride is asked to lead in four circumambulations and the groom in three. The ratio of honour due to woman and man is 4 to 3. That is why, in social interactions women are given preference over gentlemen. (Note the nomenclature of duos of Indian deities-*Sita-Ram, Radhey-Shyam, Luxmi-Narayan, Uma-Mahesh etc.*)

PROCESS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION:

Parikramaa and *Lajahome* are carried out simultaneously. After *Shilaarohan*, while still standing the couple give one oblation with *Gayatri Mantra*. Thereafter, begins the process of *Parikramaa* with the bride leading in the first four cycles in a clock-wise direction. On completion of each cycle one oblation is given with *Laajaahome*. This is followed by three additional cycles in which the groom moves ahead of the bride. During the *Parikrama* the bride and the groom conceptualize being increasingly engulfed by the divine anergy generated from the oblations from without and motivations for dedication to society from within. They also concentrate on the concept of leading an ideal family life conforming to ideals imbibed in the process of *Yagya*.

LAAJAAHOMA MANTRAAH:

**1. OM! ARYAMANAM DEVAM KANYAA
AGNIMAYAKSHATA. SA NO ARYAMAA DEVAH
PRETO, MUNCHANTU MAA PATEH
SWAAHAA. IDAMARYAMNE-AGNAYE IDAM
NA MAMA.**

**2. OM! IYAM NARYUPABROOTE LAAJAA
NAAWAPANTIKAA. AAYUSHMAANASTU ME
PATIREDHANTAM, GYAATAYO MAMA
SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**

**3. OM! IMANLLAAJAANA AVAPAAM-
YAGNAU, SAMRIDDHIKARANAM TAVA.
MAMA TUBHYAM CHA SAMVANANAM,
TADAGNIRANUMANYATAAMIYA GWAM
SWAAHAA. IDAM AGNAYE IDAM NA MAMA.**

PARIKRAMAA MANTRAH:

**OM! TUBHYAMAGRE PARYAVAHANT-
SOORYAAM, VAHATU NA SAH. PUNAH PATIBHYO
JAAYAANDAA AGNE PRAJAYAA SAH.**

SAPTAPADI

(The seven steps)

DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION

After the *Parikramaa*, *Saptapadi* is performed. The bride and the groom move seven steps together, as a team, like soldiers on the march. The path of forward movement is demarcated by keeping a handful of grains of rice or earthen cups tied with *Kalaavaa* (*auspicious thread*) at equidistant spots in front of the couple in a

straight line ahead of them. Both are then asked to take the first step and cover the first spot with the toe of the right leg. The relevant *mantra* is pronounced by the priest during the movement. Thereafter, they move to the next spot with enunciation of respective *mantra*. In this way the seven spots are covered successively.

The first step is taken for **Food**, the second for **Strength**, the third for **Resources**, the fourth for **Entertainment**, the fifth for **Family**, the sixth for **Conjugal Relationship** and the seventh for **Friendship**. After marriage, the life of the married couple basically involves seven fields of activity. *Saptapadi* outlines their appropriate contributions to each of these fields.

THE FIRST STEP (FOOD)

Food must be health-promoting. Over-indulgence in savoriness and gluttony should find no place in the house-hold kitchen. Nutritional value should be given preference over taste. An ideal family-person is one who knows how to make contribution to better production, preservation and utilization of food material. In spite of heavy expenditure on food, if it is over-cooked, ill-stored, wasted in kitchen or on dining table, made unhealthy by excess of spices, cooked in unhealthy conditions or subjected to other such irregularities, it would only destroy family health and economy. It is the primary responsibility of married couple to ensure nutritional value and purity of food.

THE SECOND STEP (STRENGTH)

Excercise, hard work, proper food and regular food-habits preserve health. Study, discussions and contem-
plation increase the intellectual efficacy. The couple should
be ever vigilant towards these aspects and keep on look-
ing for ways and means for becoming more effective,
healthy and strong.

THE THIRD STEP (RESOURCES)

Effective financial management of house-hold af-
fairs necessitates proper budgeting. Not a penny should
be wasted in unproductive ventures. However, let one not
be a miser where expenditure is justified. Instead of wast-
ing money in exhibitionism, addictions and projection of
self-image, money should be saved for upliftment of liv-
ing standard of the family. In fact husband and wife both
contribute towards family resources in their own way.
Their contributions, though belonging to different fields
of activity, are equally significant. Whereas man's do-
main is outdoor, where he works to earn by various occu-
pations, the woman at home contributes to the family re-
sources, by efficient economical management of domes-
tic affairs. It is as much necessary for the married couple
to take care of financial management at home by keeping
discipline in domestic expenditure, as it is to find avenues
for augmenting family resources by outdoor occupations.

THE FORTH STEP (RELAXATION AND ENTERTAINMENT)

Such an environment of relaxation, entertainment, amusement, pastime and interaction of humour is required to be created, that even with minimal means of comfort and resources one begets the contentment and pleasures of the rich. Let the couple make an endeavour to remain happily relaxed, ever-smiling and find happiness in small events and thinking. Problems should not be taken too seriously. Let them believe in the adage *Contentment is the key to lasting happiness.*

THE FIFTH STEP (INTER-PERSONAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTION)

Norms of etiquette should never be lost sight of in dealing with younger and older persons. Dependent animals and attendants should also be treated as members of family. There should not be any carelessness in being ever watchful and active in taking appropriate care of the dependents and making arrangement for their safety, comfort and welfare.

THE SIXTH STEP (SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP)

Reproduction is a need of nature. Being a natural instinct, sex plays an important role in married life. Nevertheless, in this context self-restraint should be observed with maximum strictness and vigilance, since any deviation therefrom is likely to damage the health of either

couple. In spite of being married, the couple are advised to follow *Brahmcharya (Sex-discipline)* appropriately avoiding reckless sexual activity. Let the couple regard each other more as partners and intimate friends and save themselves from the damaging consequences of reckless sex. Think a million times about the financial, physical and psychological implications before bringing a child in the family.

THE SEVENTH STEP (CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIP)

The seventh commitment of the couple is towards maintenance of conjugal friendship and strengthening it progressively. Let either amongst the couple introspect minutely whether any such mistake is being repeatedly committed, which is likely to create a situation for estrangement or alienation or discontentment of the spouse. Even if the other partner is behaving erratically, the reaction should not be retaliatory, sharp or hurting. On the contrary, a gentle, tolerant, affectionate reciprocity makes the other person pensive and may motivate repentance inducing latter to take steps for penance, retribution or reformation of self.

Tit for tat may be an effective strategy for an alien to a certain extent, but for winning the heart of one's intimate associate in family there is no option to forgiveness, expression of fellowship and selfless service.

In a nutshell, the foregoing are the seven pillars of ideals and principles of conjugal relationship, adopting

which the couple can be rest assured of a happy family life.

ACTION AND CONCEPTUALISATION

Let the bride and the groom stand side by side. With each step forward, the relevant *mantra* for invocation of requisite divine power is pronounced. Meditating on the same, with folded hands, the couple moves forward and successive steps are taken. During the process both conceptualize that they are taking the pledge for a progressive life in presence of divine powers as witness and that their own resolve and divine grace would jointly help them throughout their life.

MANTRAAS FOR SAPTAPADI

1- (For food, with omnipresent God as witness)

**OM! EKO VISHNUR JAGATSARVAM,
VYAAPTAM YEN CHARAACHARAM HRIDAYE
YASTATO YASYA TASYA SAAKSHEE
PRADEEYATAAM.**

1-The first step

**OM! ISH EKPADI BHAVASAA
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAV, VISHNUSTWAANAYATU
PUTRAAN VINDA VAHAI, BAHOONSTE SANTU
JARADASHTAYAH.**

2- (For strength with the witness of soul, God, earth, space, learned persons, radiations of sun and moon)

OM! JEEVAATMAA PARMAATMAA CHA,

**PRITHIVEE AAKAASHAMEVA CHA.
SOORYACHANDRADWAYOR MADHYE, TASYA
SAAKSHEE PRADEEYATAAM.**

2-The Second step

**OM! OORJE DWIPADI BHAVASAA
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA
VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAA
VAHAI, BAHOONSTE SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.**

**3-(For resources of Gayatri with the trinity
of attributes, powers, sensory and extra-sensory ex-
istence)**

**OM! TRIGUNASHCHA TRIDEVAASHCHA,
TRISHAKTIHI SATPARAAYANAHAH. LOKATRAYE
TRISANDHYAAYAAH, TASYA SAAKSHEE
PRADEEYATAAM.**

The third step

**OM! RAAYASPOSHAAI TRIPADI BHAVASAA
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA, VISHNUSTWAA
NAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAA VAHAI, BAHOONSTE
SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.**

**4-(For happiness, with all scriptural doctrines and
eternal time as witness)**

**OM! CHATURMUKHASTATO BRAHMAA,
CHATWAARO VED SAMBHAVAH. CHATUR
YUGAAH PRAVARTANTE, TESHAM SAKSHEE
PRADEEYATAAM.**

The fourth step

**OM! MAAYO BHAAVAI CHATUSHPADEE
BHAVASAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA,**

**VISHNUSTVAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI
BAHOONSTE SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.**

5-(For personal management with the five physical and extra-sensory shells of human existence (*annamai kosh, manomai kosh, pranmai kosh, vigyanmai kosh and anandmai kosh*) and their motivative powers as witness.)

**OM! PANCHAME PANCH BHOOTAANAAM,
PANCH PRAANAIH PARAAYANAAM. TATRA
DARSHAN PUNYAANAAM, SAAKSHINAH PRAAN
PANCHADHAA.**

The fifth step

**OM! PRAJAABHYAH PANCHAPADEE BHAVA
SAA MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA.
VISHNUSTWAANAYATU PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI
BAHOONSTE SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.**

6- (For sex-with the climates and the six types of sensory pleasures as witness.)

**OM! SHASHTHE SHASHTH RITUNAAM CHA,
SHANMUKHAH SWAMI KAARTIKAH.
SHADRASAAM YATRA JAAYANTE,
KAARTIKEYAASHCHA SAAKSHINAH.**

The sixth step

**OM! RITUBHYAH SHATPADEE BHAVASAA
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA. VISHNUSTWAANA-
YATU PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI BAHOONSTE
SANTU JARADASHTAYAH.**

7- (For conjugal relationship-with the seven seas, continents and the invisible presence of wives of the seven *Rishis* as witness.)

**OM! SAPTAME SAAGARAASHCHAIV,
SAPTADWEE PAAH SAPAVATAAH. YESHAAM
SAPTARSHI PATNEENAAM, TESHAMAADARSHA
SAAKSHINAH.**

The seventh step

**OM! SAKHE SAPTAPADI BHAVA SAA
MAAMANUVRATAA BHAVA. VISHNUSTWAANAYATU
PUTRAAN VINDAAVAHAI, BAHONSTE SANTU
JARADASHTAYAH.**

AASAN PARIVARTANAM

(Interchange of seats)

After *Saptapadi*, the bride and the groom are asked to interchange the seating positions. Upto the ritual of *Saptapadi* the bride takes a seat on the right of the groom. After the oaths taken during *Saptapadi* she becomes an integrated unit of the family, who can now share close family secrets. In Hindu society, wife is given a senior status in the family. Amongst the Hindu deities to the name of the male counterpart occupies the second position (*Sita-Ram, Radhey-Shyam, Luxmi-Narayan, Uma-Mahesh, Shachi-Purander* etc. The two represent the energy-*chetan* and the physical-*jud* complements of divine powers which work in unison for creation). The interchange of position also signifies mutual sharing of rights and privileges.

Change the positions with the following *mantra*.

**OM! IH GAAVO NISHEEDANTU IHYAASHVAA
IH POORUSHAHAA. IHO SAHASRADAKSHINO
YAGYA IH POOSHA NISHEEDANTU.**

PAADPRAKSHAALANAM

(Washing the feet)

After the interchange of seats the bride and the groom are regarded as devotees entering the hermitage of family-life. As an honour to them, therefore, their feet are washed. Let a married couple or some representative of bride's family perform this rite. Prior to taking part in the rite, the couple are to undergo purification by themselves by the consecrating *Pavitrikaran mantra*. Thereafter they wash the feet of the marrying couple with ground turmeric and *Doorva* by pouring water on their feet (placed in a large plate.) With the enunciation of the first *mantra*, wash the feet three times and with the second one, offer the desired presentation (cash or ornament).

**OM! YAA TE PATIGHNEE PRAJAAGHNEE PASHU
GHNEE, GRIHAGHNEE YASHOGHNEE NINDITAA,
TANOORJAARAGHNEEM TATA-ENAAMKAROMI, SAA
JEERYA TWAM MAYAASAH**

**OM! BRAHMANAASHAALAAM NIMITAAM,
KAVIBHIRNIMATAAM MITAAM. INDRAAGNEE**

RAKSHA TAAM SHAALAAM, AMRITAU SOMYAM SADAH.

SOORYA DHYAANAM

(Meditating on sun- when marriage is performed during day.)

Savitaa-the energy of God operating in sun, is the most powerful source of energy on this planet. Let the couple maintain permanency of activity, glory and a prominent position (in society) like the sun in this planetary system. As the sun follows the same path of revolution in this system, with its benign influences, let the newlyweds resolve to be steady in activities of welfare in their society.

**OM! TACHCHAKSHURDEVAHITAM PURASTA-
CHCHHUKRA-MUCHCHARAT. PASHYEMA SHARADAH
SHATAM, JEEVEMASHARADAH SHATA GWAM,
SHRINUYAAMA SHARADAH SHATAM, PRABRAVAAMA
SHARADAH SHATAMADEENAAHAA, SYAMA SHARADAH
SHATAM, BHOORYASHCHA SHARADAH SHATAAT.**

DHRUVA DHYAANAM

(Meditating on the Polar Star-
when marriage is performed during night.)

The Polar Star named in Indian scriptures as *Dhruva Tara*, is regarded as a synonym for steadfastness. This star was named after a *Rishi* of the same name, who had showed exemplary courage as a child and did not deviate

in his persistent endeavour in seeking a communion with God. The Polar Star, as we know, does not change its position with respect to our planetary system whereas other stars and planets are ever in motion.

The objective of meditating on Polar Star is to remind the couple that they are expected to be steadfast in carrying out their responsibilities, would not deviate from the pledges made for the ideals, live accordingly and fulfill the promises made. The Polar Star also motivates one to be stable in mind and firm in performance of duties.

**OM! DHRUVAMASI DHRUVAM TWAA PASHYAAMI,
DHRUVAIDHI POSHYE MAYI MAHYAM TWAADAAT.
BRIHAS PATIRMAYAA PATYAA, PRAJAAVATEESANJEEV
SHARADAH SHATAM.**

SHAPATH AASHVAASAN

(Mutual Reassurance)

Keeping their right hands over the head of the other the bride and the groom take a final oath and give a touching, heartfelt assurance to each other, that let there be no doubt in their sincerity. That they are emphatically and sincerely assuring each other of their honesty, sincerity and faithfulness for whole of life.

It is the bane of modern society that man has begun to treat woman disdainfully and his behaviour towards her has become hypocritic, exploitative and perfidious. Whatever intimacy man is cultivating with the other sex today, is with the ulterior motive of exploiting

her youth and sex. As soon as the bond of this loose relationship of youth and sex slackens, the treatment of man towards woman becomes harsh and sadistic. The woman of this world is living today as a bonded labour—a virtual slave of man. Her freedom is lesser in society and home than even of a domesticated animal. Blatantly disregarding ethics in domestic life, man is behaving like a characterless, uncivilized human being—using his resources selfishly and recklessly without caring for the needs of his wife. This is the state of affair & in most of the family-relationships today.

Under the circumstances, a woman, in general, is likely to be sceptic and might consider this oath-taking ceremony as hypocritical and perfunctory. In the prevailing situation, her apprehensions are only a natural reaction.

Some amongst married men even go to the extent of marrying a second time under the lame excuse of getting an issue, a son which they could not obtain from the existing wife or on some other trivial pretext of incompatibility. The bride who is very well aware of such trends in the society does have apprehensions about her future life. Here lies the significance of the reassurance given by the groom during the present rite. Keeping his right hand over the head (or right shoulder) of the bride, the groom implores not to be considered as one of the aforesaid hypocrites. With the deities (divine powers) and elites of the society as witness, he gives an assurance that he would behave like a gentleman. On the other

hand, the bride also reciprocates her dedication to the husband. The following *mantra* is pronounced during the ritual.

**OM! MAMA VRATE TE HRIDAYAM DADHAAMI,
MAMA CHITTAMANU CHITTAM TE ASTU. MAMA
VAACHAMEKAMANAA JUSHASWA, PRAJAAPA-
TISHTWAA NIYUNAKTU MAHYAMMA.**

SUMANGALEE-SINDOOR DAAN

(Application of vermilion mark on the parting of hair
on the head of the bride)

With the application of vermilion mark on the head of the bride, the groom puts a stamp on his pledges which now identifies him in the society as husband and benefactor of his wife and prays to Almighty to give him sufficient strength and motivation for elevating her qualifications and status. Wife always wears this mark on the parting of hair on her head as a proud insignia of a worthy husband.

Action-With the pronouncement of *mantra*, the groom applies the vermilion mark (*Sindoor*) three times on the middle of the head of the bride with the help of a coin or ring.

**OM! SUMANGALEERIAM VADHOO-
RIMAA GWAM SAMETA PASHYATA.
SAUBHAAGYAMASYAI DATWAA YAATHAAS-
TAM VIPARETANA. SUBHAGAA STREE**

SAAVITRYAASTAV SAUBHAAGYAM BHAVATU.**MANGAL TILAKAM****(Application of Tilak by the bride)**

In reciprocation of groom's gesture in *Sindoor Dan* the bride applies *Tilak* on the forehead of her groom with the concept that she too is honouring him and pledging to increase his status and honour in the society.

**OM! SWASTAYE VAAYUMUPA-
BRAVAAMAHAL, SOMAM SWASTI BHUVANASYA
YASPATIHI. BRIHASPATIM SARVAGANAM
SWASTAYE, SWASTAY- AADITYAASO BHAVANTU
NAH.**

SWISHTAKRIT HOMAH**(Penitential oblations)**

Successful fruition of an action depends on its appropriate performance. To err is human. In order to make amends for any mistakes committed inadvertently during all foregoing rituals, an additional oblation is given with sweets (with the help of *Shruchi*-the wooden spoon-shaped equipment with the longer hand). The following mantra is enunciated.

**OM! YADASYA KARMANO
TYAREERICHAM, YADWAANYOONA-**

**MIHAAKARAM, AGNISHTAT-SWISHTAKRID
VIDYAT-SARVAM, SWISHTAM SUHUTAM
KAROTU-ME. AGNAYE SWISHTAKRITE
SUHUTAHUTE, SARVAPRAAYASHCHITTA-
HUTEENAAM KAAMAANAAM SAMARDHA-
YITRE, SARVAANNAH KAAMAANT-
SAMARDHAYA SWAAHAA. IDAMAGNAYE
SWISHTAKRITE IDAM NA MAM.**

POORNAAHUTIHI

(The final oblation)

This is carried out with a dry fruit of coconut (The outer hard shell is removed. A hole is made for filling the *Havishya*.)

**OM! POORNAMADAH POORNAMIDAM,
POORNAAT POORNAMUDACHYATE. POORNASYA
POORNAMAADAAM, POORNAMEVAASHISH-
YATE. OM POORNAADARVI PARAAPATA,
SUPOORNA PUNARAAPATA. VASNEV
VIKREENAA VAHAA ISHMOORJA GWAM
SHATAKRATO SWAAHAA. OM SARVAM VAI
POORNA GWAM SWAAHAA.**

VASORDHAARAA

While standing pour ghee with the help of *Shruchi* (see *Swistikrit homah* above) in an uninterrupted flow over the sacred fire with the following *mantra*.

**OM! VASOH PAVITRAMASI
SHATADHAARAM, VASOH PAVITRAMASI
SAHASRADHAARAM DEVASTWAA SAVITAA
PUNAATU VASOHO, PAVITREN SHATADHAAREN
SUPWAA, KAAMADHUKSHAH SWAAHAA.**

NEERAAJANAM - AARATEE

(A supplication to all divine powers)

**OM! YAM BRAHMAVEDAANTA VIDO
VADANTI, PARAM PRADHAANAM PURUSHAM
TATHAANYE. VISHWODGATE KAARANAMEESH-
WARAM WAA TASMAI NAMO VIGHNA
VINAASHANAAL.**

**OM! YAM BRAHMAA VARUNENDRA RUDRA
MARUTAH, STUNVANTI DIVYAIH STAVAIH.
VEDAIH SANGAPADAKRAMOPANISHADAIH,
GAYANTI YAM SAMA GAH. DHYAANA AVASTHITA
TADGATENAMANASAA, PASHYANTI YAM
YOGINO, YASYAANTAM NA VIDUHU SURASUR
GANAAH DEVAAI TASMAI NAMAH.**

GHRIT- AVAGHRAANAM

(Assimilation of energy from oblations)

The *Ghee* dropped in the water kept in *Praneeta* is smeared in palms of both hands by rubbing them together. Thereafter, palms of both hands are held together in a vertical position (parallel to the body with the

elbows at side). Thus warming the hands in the fire of *Havan Kund*, it is conceptualized that they are assimilating the energy of *Yagya* through radiation. Thereafter, this energy is imbibed in self by smelling and touching the parts of the body as directed with enunciation of *mantras*.

OM! TANOOPAA AGNESI, TANVAM ME PAAHL
OM! AAURDA AGNESI, AAURME DEHL
OM! VARCHODAA AGNESI, VARCHO ME DEHL
OM! AGNEYANME TANWAA, OONANTANMA
AAPRINA.
OM! MEDHAAM ME DEVAH, SAVITAA
AADADHAATU.

OM! MEDHAAM ME DEVEE, SARASWATEE
AADADHAATU.
OM! MEDHAAM ME ASHWINAU, DEVA
VAADHATTAAM- PUSHKARASRAJAU.

(Pronounce *Gayatri Mantra* repeatedly till each person present has completed the ritual.)

BHASMA- DHAARANAM

(Application of Ash-the essence of *Yagya*)

In a corner of *Yagya Kund* insert the *Sphai* (the flat wooden equipment like the letter opener) for collecting ash from the sacred fire. With pronunciation of respective *mantra*, take a little of this ash (*Bhasm*) on the tip of ring finger and touch respectively on the forehead,

throat, left arm (below the shoulder) and heart.

**OM! TRYAAUSHAM JAMADAGNEH-ITI
LALAATE.**

**OM! KASHYAPASYA TRYAAUSHAM-ITI
GREEVAAYAAM.**

**OM! YADDEVESHU TRYAAUSHAM-ITI
DAKSHIN BAAHUMOOLE.**

OM! TANNO ASTU TRYAAUSHAM-ITI HRIDI.

KSHAMAA PRAARTHANAA

(A prayer seeking forgiveness for inadvertent mistakes)

**OM! AAVAAHANAM NA JAANAAMI,
NAIV JAANAAMI POOJANAM
VISARJANAM NA JAANAAMI,
KSHAMASWA PARAMESHWAR!
MANTRAHEENAM KRIYAAHEENAM,
BHAKTIHEENAM SURESHWAR!
YATPOOJITAM MAYAADEV!
PARIPOORNAM TASTU ME.
YADAKSHARA PADABHRASHTAM,
MAATRAA HEEENAM CHA YAD BHAVET
TATSARVAM KSHAMYATAAMDEV!
PRASEED PARAMESHWAR!
YASYASMRITYAA CHA NAAMOKTYA,
TAPOYAGYAKRIYAADISHU.
NYOONAM SAMPOORNATAAM YAATI,
SADYO VANDE TAMACHYUTAM.**

**PRAMAADAATKURVATAAM KARMA,
PRACHYAVETAADHWASRESHU YAT.
SMARNAADEV TADWISHNOH,
SAMPOORNAM SYAADITI SHRUTHIHL**

SAASHTAANG NAMASKAARAH

(Supplication with prostration)

**OM! NAMOSTWANANTAAI SAHASRA
MOORTAYE, SAHASRA PAADAAKSHISHIRO-
RUBAAHAVE. SAHASRA NAAMNE
PURUSHAAI SHAASHWATE SAHASRA KOTEE
YUG DHAARINE NAMAH.**

ABHISHEK SINCHANAM

(Watering the seeds of virtuous traits)

Let the wife and husband be seated. With the water in *Kalash* sprinkle few drops with the help of a flower over the couple and conceptualize as though the virtuous traits sown during this ceremony are being watered to grow into plants. Wish that with the goodwill of everyone present the virtues will grow to bear fruits of success and skill.

**1. GANAPATHI GIRIJAA VRISHABHADHWAJAH,
SHANMUKHO NANDEEMUKH DIMDIMAA.
MANUJAMAL TRISHOOL-MRIGATWACHAH,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**

- 2. RAVI SHASHEE-KUJ-INDRA-JAGATPATIHI,
BHRIGUJ -BHANUJ- SINDHUJ-KETAWAH.
UDUGANAA- TITHIYOG CHA RAASHAYAH,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**
- 3. VARUN INDRA KUBER HUTASHANAAH,
YAM SAMEERAN VAARAN KUNJARAHAH.
SURGANAAH SURAASHCHA MAHEEDHARAHAH,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**
- 4. SURASARI-RAVINANDINI-GOMATI,
SARYUTAAMAPI SAAGAR GHARGHARAA.
KANAKAYAAMAYI-GANDAKI-NARMADAA,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**
- 5. HARIPUREE-MATHURAA CHA TRIVENIKAA,
BADARI -VISHNU- BATESHWAR -KAUSHILA.
MAYA- GAYAAMAPI- DARDAR- DWAARIKAA,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**
- 6. BHRIGU MUNISHCHA PULASTI CHA ANGIRA,
KAPILAVASTU AGASTYA CHA NARADAH.
GURU VASHISHTHA SANAATAN JAIMINEE,
PRATIDINAM KUSHALAM VAR KANYAYOH.**

**RIGVEDOTH YAJURVEDAH,
SAAMVEDOHYA-THARVANAH.
RAKSHANTU CHATUROVEDAAH,
YAAVACHCHANDRA DIVAKARAU.**

VISARJANAM
(Bidding farewell)

All divine powers invited (invoked) are now given a farewell with the following *mantras*.

- 1. GACHCHHATWAM BHAGAVANNAGNE
SWASTHANE KUND MADHYATAH.
HUTAMAADAAI DEVEBHIAH,
SHIGHRAM DEHI PRASEEDA ME.**
- 2. GACHCHHA GACHCHHA SURASHRESHTHA,
SWASTHAANE PARAMESHWARA!
YATRA BRAHMAADAYO DEVAH,
TATRA GACHCHHA HUTAASHANA!**
- 3. YAANTU DEVAGANAAH SARVE,
POOJAAMAADAAI MAAMAKEEM.
ISHTAKAAM SAMRIDHYARTHAM,
PUNARAAGAMANAAYA CHA.**

Now each person present on the occasion is given flower and rice grains with a little water in right hand , which they shower on the couple in unison with the

enunciation of auspicious welfare-mantras (*Mangalam Bhagawaan Vishnuhu.....or Shree Varchaswa Mayushyamarogyam....*)

All other socialities of the family and distribution of *Prasadam* may now be carried out. After the completion of the ceremony, the married couple is escorted to pay obeisance at the place of worship in the home, at *Shakti Peeths* etc. wherever they exist, or to some important recognized place of workship.



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PRONOUNCE

AS

A	as <u>U</u> in <u>UP</u> e.g. BHU <u>WAH</u> , SW <u>ASH</u> , VARE <u>NYAM</u> , BH <u>ARGO</u> , YO <u>NAH</u>
AA	as <u>A</u> in <u>CALL</u> . e.g. PRACHOD <u>AYAAT</u> .
E	as <u>E</u> in <u>SET</u> e.g. VARE <u>NYAM</u>
EE	as <u>EE</u> in <u>FREE</u> e.g. DHE <u>E</u> MAHI
I	as <u>I</u> in <u>KIT</u> e.g. DHE <u>E</u> MAHI, DH <u>I</u> YO
O	As <u>O</u> in <u>MODE</u> e.g. PRACH <u>O</u> DAYAAT
OO	As <u>OO</u> in <u>BOON</u> e.g. BH <u>OO</u> R
U	As <u>U</u> in <u>PUT</u> e.g. BHU <u>WAH</u>
AU	As <u>U</u> in <u>BOUNTY</u> e.g. DY <u>AU</u> SHANTI
AM	As <u>UM</u> in <u>UMBRA</u> e.g. VARE <u>NYAM</u>
AH	As <u>AH!</u> e.g. SW <u>AH</u>

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